

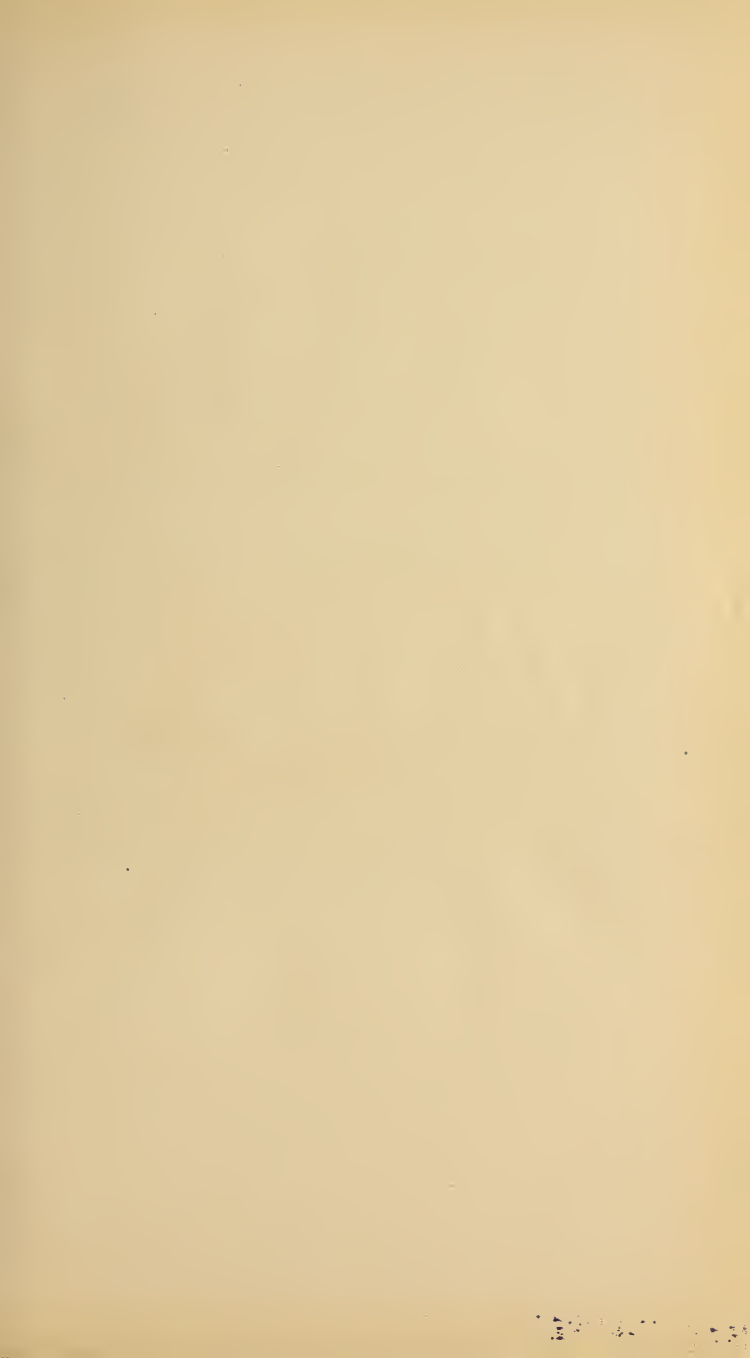
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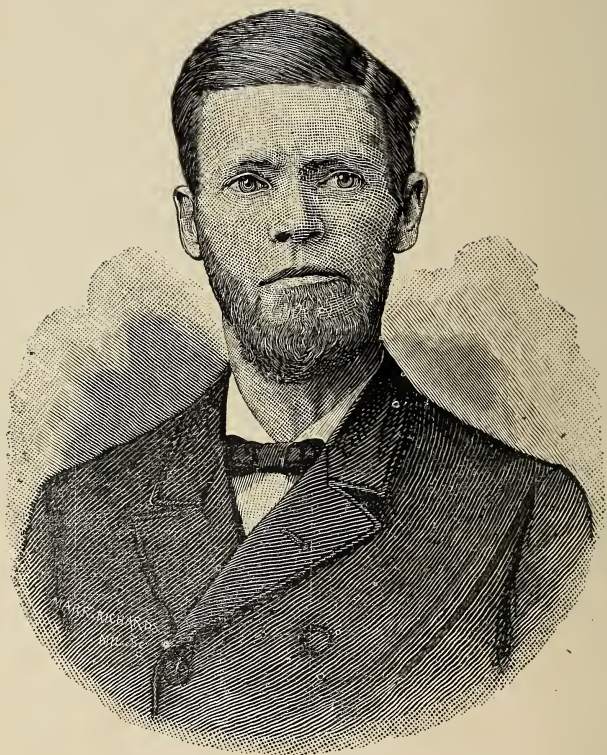
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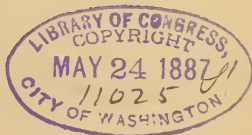
Sermons and Papers

BY

REV. G. S. HUBBS, A. M.

"GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS, HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME."--PAUL.

"HERE IN FULL TRUST; HEREAFTER IN FULL JOY."--YOUNG.



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DEDICATED
to
My Family,
My Brother,
My Friends,
and to
My Brethren
of the
Wisconsin Annual Conference
of the
Methodist Episcopal Church.

To the Reader.

Why is this book? What right has it to be? Its existence and reason may be explained in few words. My shattered health compels me to preach in type if I preach at all. A friend urged me to prepare such a volume; others said I ought to do it; advance-subscriptions removed all financial risk. The object of the book is to do good. I know that every part of it has been prepared with a view to God's glory and men's good. The most prayerful work of my life has been done on this book. If it fails to convert sinners and edify believers, I shall be disappointed.

What is this book? Aside from a short poem, a letter of consolation, an essay on Future Punishment, and an essay on Mental Culture, it is a volume of sermons. The opening sermon and four others were written specially for this work. Half the volume is made up of sermons now written out for the first time from the brief notes originally used. These have had the benefit of my mature reflection and added experience. All

others have been carefully revised and, generally, much changed. To give greater variety, I have made nearly all the sermons short. I trust they are not mere outlines; I have tried to condense them without squeezing them dry. The only arrangement of the contents is as follows: the longer articles are put at some distance from one another; the sermons on the Decalogue are in consecutive order; and the sermons to sinners and sermons to saints will be found (as we find sinners and saints) intermixed.

I have honestly tried to make a helpful, readable, thoroughly Christian book. I hope it will have a mission, if its field is not large. I commend it to God, and pray that it may glorify his Son, our Savior.

THE AUTHOR.

Janesville, Wis., April 25, 1887.

Contents.

	Page.
DEATH THE GATEWAY TO LIFE, - - -	9
GONE (A MEMORIAL POEM), - - -	27
THE BLESSINGS OF SORROW, - - -	29
DEBTS TO GOD, - - - -	32
JOHN THE BAPTIST: or, YOUR MISSION, -	37
DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT, -	43
<i>Sermons on the Decalogue:</i>	
INTRODUCTORY WORDS, - - -	58
I. JEHOVAH SUPREME, - - -	64
II. IDOLATRY FORBIDDEN, - - -	72
III. PROFANE SWEARING, - - -	78
THE SIN OF IRREVERENCE, - - -	83
IV. THE SABBATH, - - -	88
LABOR THE LAW OF LIFE, - - -	94
V. FILIAL DUTIES, - - -	99
VI. THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE, -	107
VII. MARRIAGE AND HOME, - - -	113
VIII. DISHONESTY, - - - -	121
IX. LYING, - - - -	127
X. COVETOUSNESS, - - - -	133
MENTAL CULTURE A CHRISTIAN DUTY, -	140
ENOCH: or, WALKING WITH GOD, - -	166

	Page.
SIMEON: or, CHRIST REVEALED, - - -	174
THE MIRAGE OF LIFE, - - -	182
WHAT SHALL I DO WITH CHRIST? -	191
ABEL: or, THE SPEAKING DEAD, - -	203
DEATH-BED REPENTANCE, - -	213
CHRISTIANITY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, -	224
LESSONS FROM THE THREE CROSSES, -	232
RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN, - - -	236

DEATH THE GATEWAY TO LIFE.

“Why should we start and fear to die?
What tim'rous worms we mortals are!
Death is the gate to endless joy,
And yet we dread to enter there.”

These lines of Dr. Watts are a forcible statement of a very common inconsistency of our conduct with our creed. No one doubts that the New Testament teaches life beyond the grave; yet to many who accept the authority of Christianity—even to many who are truly Christians—there is a shadowy unreality, a vagueness of faith, that becloud hope and beget fear. They have more hope than firm faith, but their hope is not so much expectation as desire. This world and this life seem more real than the world and the life that we must die to know.

True, we know nothing of the mode of existence the other side of death, and but little of the world to come: but the same was true of us all as to *this* life and *this* world, before we began to breathe the vital air; yet we found oxygen for our lungs, milk for our hunger, care for our helplessness, light for our eyes, sound for our ears, and a solid world waiting for the tread of our feet. Wherever God has given life of any sort, he has, so far as our knowledge extends,

provided the proper sustenance and environment. The mode and the surroundings of the life to come may well be left to Divine Wisdom; our immediate concern is in the fact and the blessedness of the Christian's eternal future.

The New Testament uses various words and phrases to bring before our minds that which lies beyond death; but it is remarkable that it uses, for this purpose, more frequently than any other word, the word LIFE. Life is a word that needs no definition outside of our experience; life is one of the most real of all the objects of our knowledge; life is, to the most of men, a priceless treasure, so that "all that a man hath will he give for his life." If what we want is "more life and fuller," the revealing Spirit has met the need of our faith by the frequent application of the word life to the heavenly state. There life is more real than it is here, it is not succeeded by death, but flows on forever. A sick Christian asked an attendant to write for him a letter to a friend. "Say to him," said the sufferer, "that I am still in the land of the living—*no, do not write that*—say that I am still in the land of the dying, but hope soon to be in the land of the living." Truly this is the land of the dying and the dead: be it ours to learn from God's Word, and to see with the "eyes of the heart," that heaven is the "land of the living." Let us try to focalize the light that beams out

from the word "life" in the New Testament, so as to make the next world seem like our home, not like a "castle in the air," but "our house which is from heaven," with which we expect to be "clothed upon" when we are "unclothed" by death of "our earthly house of this tabernacle."

The future state of the redeemed is, in forty places in the New Testament, called "eternal life," "life eternal," "everlasting life," or "life everlasting." These varying expressions are all translations of the same Greek words. There are three Greek words for which our word life stands in the New Testament: one of them always refers to man's life in the flesh; another has no perfectly clear application to any life but the present; the third word is used of this life and of the future life, and is the term used in all the texts quoted or referred to in this discourse. The expression, "eternal life," like the phrase, "Kingdom of God," is often inclusive of both worlds, but is often applied only to that part of our spiritual life which lies in the spirit-world. In thirteen of the forty passages, it is limited, by the connection, to life after death. The frequency of this term would suggest that it is peculiarly expressive. It certainly means more than immortality. The end of the ungodly is not called life. Some one has defined hell as "everlasting life in pain," but where does the

New Testament dignify the future existence of the wicked by the word life? On the contrary, it is said that "he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life;" that "he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;" that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Further, the spiritual condition of unbelievers is frequently called "death:" they are "dead in trespasses and sins." Their condition in the world to come is often represented by the same word, and this is naturally put in contrast with the life promised to God's people: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Not only is the future of the unsaved called death, but it is also called perdition, destruction, everlasting destruction, everlasting punishment. By these and similar expressions, their sad condition in the world to come is set before us, but the word life is nowhere in the Bible applied to their state; that word is reserved, in its application to the Hereafter, to the redeemed, and to God who, out of his fullness of uncreated life, bestows "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," on believing and obedient men.

Eternal life is not, therefore, simply endless existence. We are prone to put the emphasis on the "eternal," and thus lose the deep significance of the noun to which it belongs. It is a blessed

truth that "there shall be no more death" in the heavenly state, or, as the Savior phrased it, "Neither can they die any more;" but the *quality* of that deathless state comes out in the word "life." The reality of that state is vividly pictured by this word which proves the continuance of our consciousness, our thoughts, our affections, of all that makes "life worth living" in the present world. No shadowy realm, no "land of darkness," no dreamy existence, no ghostly underworld such as heathen poets painted, can be harmonized with those words, "eternal *life*." Put the emphasis where the scripture puts it, on the word "life;" for it will appear, as we proceed, that the inspired writers often drop the adjective and represent the believer's future by the simple word, "life."

Paul told Timothy that godliness has "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Thus did the apostle bring clearly out the doctrine that "life is real" in the next world if it is real in this world. In the same epistle, he urges Timothy to so instruct the rich "that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." This is the Revised Version of the correct Greek text, and shows that the word life has a deeper, fuller meaning in its application to the world to come than it has when it refers to the present world.

We must not fail to note that, in many instan-

ces, "life" and "eternal life" are used interchangeably. In John 3:36 we read, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." In the fifth chapter of the same Gospel are two like cases of the use of these interchangeable expressions; and in the tenth chapter the Good Shepherd's words are, in one verse, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," while a later verse puts the same thought into the words, "I give unto them eternal life." Two more illustrative passages might be quoted from the First Epistle of John. In Mat. 19:17 occurs the question, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Saviour's reply is, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Similarly, when a lawyer asked the question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" our Lord drew forth from him the two "great commandments," and said, "This do and thou shalt live." As Christ and his apostles viewed it, life is a word more consistently applied to that portion of our existence and experience that succeeds death, than to the small portion that precedes it. This earthly life is only the threshold of our house "eternal in the heavens."

The Master's language, before quoted, "If thou wilt enter into life," does not stand alone in the use of that peculiar expression. In the

eighteenth of Matthew, his words are thus recorded: "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." "It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." That the words, "enter into life," refer to the future state is evident from their being contrasted with "everlasting fire" and "hell fire." The parallel passage in the ninth of Mark has the words, "enter into life" twice, as in Matthew, and then the expression is changed into "It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye." In Mark, the entering into life or into the kingdom of God is contrasted with being "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." To enter into life is, therefore, to enter into the kingdom of God, and the connection shows that the words refer to after-death experience. In oriental style, the figurative language of these texts is carried to a limit that seems to indicate that one may begin the life to come in a maimed or disfigured condition, if we apply the words to the soul's future. But a little consideration of Scripture usage will help us. In the Sermon on the Mount, the same figure of cutting off an offending hand and plucking out an offending eye is used, but the conclusion is, "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole

body should be cast into hell." Evidently the meaning of entering into life with one hand or one eye, is that it is all-important that the spirit shall have the body in subjection, and that it is better to go to heaven maimed or disfigured than to go to hell with a whole and handsome body: that the roughest path that leads to life is better than the smoothest road that ends in destruction. In these interesting references the Savior makes to the future life of his people, he appears to make little or no account of death, skipping it as unworthy of mention in the case of the faithful, or christening it with a new name, *entering into life*. To our Lord this life of duty and the coming life of destiny seem often to have appeared without the dividing line of death between. He frequently ignores death. His prayer for his disciples was, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." No word of dying to get there! Again, in the same prayer, "And now I am no more in the world; but these are in the world, and I come to thee." Just before him were the betrayal, the mockery of a trial, the buffeting, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the agony of crucifixion: yet so clearly did he see "the joy that was set before him" that he makes no account of the sufferings through which he passed to his exaltation. As one standing on a foot-hill may look

away to a mountain peak, not taking into his vision the valley that lies between, so our Lord shows us how we may, in our best moments, look to the "heavenly hills," and have no vision or thought of the "valley and shadow of death" through which we shall reach the heights of heaven. Too many of God's children fear death, though they hope for heaven, forgetting that Jesus came that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Ought Christians to shrink from dying when it means "entering into life"? Let us finish that hymn of Dr. Watts's:

"The pains, the groans, the dying strife,
Fright our approaching souls away;
And we shrink back again to life,
Fond of our prison and our clay.

O would my Lord his servant meet,
My soul would stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through death's iron gate,
Nor feel the terrors as she passed.

Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Peter, in his First Epistle, speaks of husband and wife as being "heirs together of the grace of life." The reference is, as is evident, to the life eternal of which we in the flesh are only *heirs*. So our Lord drops out the word eternal, when he declares, as in the seventh of Matthew, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." As he sets the "life" over

against "destruction," the end of the "broad" way, there is no doubt he refers to eternal life. In the fifth of Romans Paul writes that "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." The future tense shows he is speaking of eternal life. In the same chapter he uses these words, "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." As he had just spoken of our being reconciled to God through Christ's death, he can refer only to that life which was subsequent to the Savior's death; for Jesus was made a priest "after the power of an endless life," and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." In the fifth of Second Corinthians, Paul indicates that the desire of burdened Christians is not simply release from this world's anxieties and sufferings, which would be only a negative good; he writes that they "groan" for something positive, something better, for more life rather than less. Hear the stately tread of his grand thought: "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." To human eyes and doubting hearts, death seems like *life swallowed up by mortality*; but to the eyes that look from the life beyond, and to believing hearts, the true meaning of a Christian's death is, "mortality swallowed up of life." To accomplish this, what a full tide of life must rush

into the soul of the departing saint! On this side, we say, "He is dead;" on the other side they say that another has "entered into life." In Second Timothy Paul calls himself an apostle "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." Of course this means the same as John's words in his First Epistle, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." In the same chapter of Second Timothy, Paul makes that glorious declaration that Christ "hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Only a Christian faith can sing, with Longfellow,

"There is no death: what seems such is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian
Whose portal we call death."

An angel, whose life was eternal life, liberated Peter and the other apostles from prison, and said to them, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." In like manner, Paul writes to the Philippians of "holding forth the word of life." Thus is the Gospel characterized as an instrument connected with the life eternal. In the latter part of his Gospel, John says he had written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." Exactly the same thought is put into this language, in his First Epistle: "That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may be-

lieve on the name of the Son of God." Thus do we learn that gospel truth was written, as well as preached, to win men to eternal life. Truly, therefore, it is the "Word of life."

But the Word, written or preached, is only an agency to produce life eternal; the origin of this life is higher up, even in that Word who "was with God and the Word was God," and of whom it was said, "In him was life." In the New Testament we often find the expression, "The living God." The words are so familiar that no passages need be quoted. But mark these words of the Savior, recorded in the sixth of John: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Here the believer is shown to be a partaker of the life of Him who says, "I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever." In the discourse whence the Savior's words as to "eating" him are quoted, he calls himself the "bread of life," and says, "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," and, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever." Our Lord said, "I am the resurrection and the life;" and the righteous shall, at his call, come forth to the "resurrection of life." Jesus is the "Prince of life," and he assured his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Paul tells the Colossians, "Your life is hid with Christ in

God," and speaks of the appearing of "Christ, who is our life." Surely, when, in looking for the origin of the life eternal in human souls, we find the same word used to set before us the blessed, underived existence of God and his Son, and the blessed, though derived, existence of those vitally related to God through Christ, the life of heaven seems as real and as certain as the existence of God and the truthfulness of our Savior.

Our faith is helped to assurance as to the life to come, by the fact that eternal life begins while we are living in the flesh. Frequently, as we have seen, the term "life" or "eternal life" refers solely to life beyond death; often, however, the term includes the life of the soul from the date of the new birth. Thus Paul, in Romans, says we should "walk in newness of life," and asserts that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." To the Ephesians he wrote, "You hath he quickened," that is, *made alive*, "who were dead in trespasses and sins." Jesus said, "He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed from death unto life.*" In John's First Epistle is this statement: "We know that we have passed from death to life." Do we want this truth put into a different form? Take the sol-

emphatic asseveration of our Lord: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Consider the Savior as addressing you instead of Martha in these words: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" The starting into life of a human soul by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," is the beginning of a deathless and blessed existence: heaven is begun on earth; eternal life has commenced in time.

"The men of grace have found
 Glory begun below;
 Celestial fruits on earthly ground,
 From faith and hope may grow."

Paul tells the Corinthians that God, who hath "wrought us for" our heavenly inheritance, "hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." This "earnest" is not a *pledge* of eternal life, but a *sample* of it, a *part* of it, and so an *assurance* of it. Hence the apostle immediately adds, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," or, as the Revised Version gives it, "to be *at home* with the Lord." In Ephesians, Paul says we have been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." The saved soul

has an assurance of eternal life, because it *has* eternal life. Writing to the Romans, Paul says we have the "first-fruits of the Spirit." If the rich experience of a saint like Paul is only the "first-fruits," "What shall the harvest be?" If our earthly experience is such that we have the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and if we "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," then "What must it be to be there?"

"And if our fellowship below,
In Jesus, be so sweet,
What highs of rapture shall we know
When round his throne we meet?"

Thus we see that the faithful Christian is not dependent on faith and hope alone: like Paul, he may say, "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God."

Have you ever noticed how this word "life" connects itself with many of those forms of speech by which the Scriptures speak of the world beyond death? Paul speaks to the Philippians of the "book of life," and the same expression occurs six times in Revelation. When the seventy disciples returned from their mission, they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." In his reply, the Master said, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Blessed are they whose names are written in the "book of life," for they shall "have right to the tree of life." Our first parents were excluded from the "tree of life," but the Savior says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." Ezekiel had visions of that tree, and John tells us that it "bore twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." This wondrous tree grows on both banks of a "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Unless "the living God" dies, that "river of water of life" will never fail, and the "tree of life" will be forever fruitful. Elsewhere in the book of Revelation, we read of the "water of life," of the "fountain of the water of life," and of "living fountains of waters." Once more we must look for this word "life." In the first of the Epistles of Christ to the seven churches, he promises access to "the tree of life;" in the second epistle, he promises a "crown of life." St. James also speaks of the "crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Truly, the "book of life," the "tree of life," the "water of life," the "crown of life," and the "Prince of life," make the Hereafter seem all aglow with life.

In that "land of the living," "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying;

neither shall there be any more pain." Are not fullness of life, unbroken peace, ceaseless joy, the unclouded vision of Christ, the meeting that knows no parting, attractive to you? We instinctively cling to the present life, and we ought to live as long and do as much work for the Master as we can, in this world; but, when our work is done, it is the Christian's privilege to feel that "to depart and to be with Christ" is "far better" than anything we can expect this side of death. The life which began in regeneration will not be destroyed or interrupted by the death of the body; rather, it will become larger, fuller, more intense and more blessed.

"So when my latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
By death I shall escape from death,
And life eternal gain."

To die is, to God's people, to "enter into life." To be "absent from the body" is to be "at home with the Lord." To be "unclothed" of our "earthly house" is to be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

Work and pray, for soon the Master's words will be spoken to you, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Let us indulge in no idle longings for heaven while the Lord says, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard;" but let us not dread or fear the summons that shall call us to our eternal home. It is not far to the world of life and light. One night the disciples were

“toiling in rowing” against a contrary wind; toward morning the Savior came unto them “walking on the sea;” when they recognized him, “They willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.” Thus can his presence and power transport us immediately to the heavenly shore. One moment we shall bid our weeping friends “good night;” the next moment the risen Savior will meet us with his “All hail!” We shall fall at his feet and worship him; we shall turn to the “loved ones gone before,” whose love-lit eyes will make them known, and bid them a “good morning” that shall never be followed by “good night,” for “there shall be no night there.”

“We know when the silver cord is loosed,
And the vail is rent away,
Not long and dark shall the passage be
To the realms of endless day.

The eye that shuts in the mortal hour,
Shall open the next in bliss;
The welcome shall sound in the heavenly world,
Ere the farewell is hushed in this.”

[The following poem was written for a service in memory of Miss Irene C. Holcomb, who died Jan. 6, 1881, in Marinette, Wis. Miss Holcomb had been a teacher in the high school and also in the M. E. Sunday-school. She was a young lady of rare gifts and graces, and, overborne by a complication of throat and lung trouble, sweetly "faded away into the light of heaven." The title was suggested by the recollection of an incident which occurred in Beloit, Wis., in my boyhood. A young lady had long been very sick, and one morning I made my usual inquiry of her brother, "How is Mary?" With trembling voice he answered, "She's gone."]

GONE.

Gone from thy friends on the earth
 Gone to thy friends in the skies;
 These sing thy heavenly birth,
 Those gaze with sorrow-filled eyes.

Gone from thy pupils below,
 Gone to the Teacher above;
 There, with the heart all aglow,
 Learning new lessons of love.

Gone from companions in toil,
 Gone to rejoice in thy rest;
 Gone from seed-sowing the soil—
 Eating the fruit of the blest.

Gone from the church of thy choice,
 Up to the temple of God;
 There thou'lt forever rejoice
 Here to have suffered His rod.

Gone from thy brother in blood,
 Gone to that Brother Divine
 Who, in a life-giving flood,
 Poured out his blood to win thine.

Gone from thy mother's caress,
 Gone to Our Father on high;
 Gone from the home thou didst bless,
 Gone to thy home in the sky.

Gone from this winter-bound coast,
 Gone to the bright Summer-Land;
 Soon as death's river was crossed,
 Life's river it seemed from the strand.

Gone where no tears shall be shed,
 Gone from a world full of strife;
 Gone from the land of the dead,
 Gone where there's fullness of life.

Gone from the suff'ring of time,
 Gone to be happy foraye;
 Gone to that healthier clime,
 Well, through eternity's day.

Gone where no weakness of voice,
 Hinders communion by word,
 Gone e'er to sing and rejoice,
 Gone where thy thought will be heard.

Gone from the twilight of faith,
 Passing in lightning-like flight,
 "Valley and shadow of death,"
 Reaching the regions of light.

Gone where in darkness none grope,
 Gone where are no weary feet;
 Gone from the wond'ring of hope,
 Gone to fruition complete.

Gone from thy work to reward;
 Gone to thy crown by the cross;
 "Into the joy of thy Lord"
 Entered by "counting all loss"

Gone where to know and be known,
 All the mind's longing shall meet;
 Gone to a seat on a throne,
 Gone, friends and kindred to greet.

Gone, yet thy work will survive;
 Gone, but thy mem'ry we'll prize;
 Gone—fare thee well—we will strive
 Thee to rejoin in the skies.

THE BLESSINGS OF SORROW.

LETTER TO A BEREAVED FRIEND.

Truly, yours is a great sorrow, but you have a great Savior and a glorious hope. The plan of salvation, the promises of the gospel, and the grace of God are specially adapted to this world of sin, disappointment and sorrow. In the perpetual calendar of the New Dispensation, the calculations are made for all latitudes and all longitudes, but a very prominent place is given to Ramah, the land of "lamentation and bitter weeping." Heaven shines more brightly when its glories are displayed beside the woes, tears and partings of this world. Jesus becomes more precious as we realize the frailty of earthly friendships. The "bow of promise" is most resplendent when the black clouds of mourning contrast with the pure white light that forms its many-colored glory. And when we see the "rainbow round about the throne," the storms will all be past, and the "Sun of Righteousness" will shine, unclouded, forever.

We shall soon be on the other side. I sit here in my study in northern Wisconsin, and look

across the Menominee river to Michigan. Heaven is only another state, and it lies just across the river, "the narrow stream of death." That blessed world is as real as the Wolverine state; it is as visible to the "eyes of the heart" as the Michigan shore is to my natural sight. Sorrow's telescopic tears make the "better country" seem nearer; friends gone before give it a home-like appearance; aching heads and hearts cause us to long for its rest; darkness and the "stormy wind fulfilling His word" make us "wish for the day."

The hardships and disappointments of life are the rough-coated messengers of God, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Pain and grief are the "weeping prophets" of Jehovah; sickness is an apostle of Christ, declaring, "Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Death comes as the angel that awoke imprisoned Peter; our chains fall off, "the iron gate that leadeth unto the city" opens "of its own accord," and the servant of Christ is forever free. All forces are under the control of our best Friend—

"The God that rules on high,
And all the earth surveys;
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas;
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love."

We need not only stronger, but larger faith—a faith which takes in the little as well as the

great things of life; a faith that includes not only bounties and fair-faced mercies, but also "blessings in disguise," among the proofs of our Savior's love; a faith that considers all providences as means of grace; a faith that with unfaltering tongue can say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger feels no fear,
In darkness knows no doubt."

DEBTS TO GOD.

“How much owest thou unto my lord?”—LUKE 16:5.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel by Luke is recorded the parable of the unjust steward. It is said he had been accused of wasting his master's goods, and, finding that he must lose his position, he proved the truth of the accusation by a still further misuse of his employer's funds. This steward is imitated every day by men who freely spend and wantonly risk other people's money. This type of our modern defaulters remitted a part of the amount due his master from different debtors, that he might get their good will and provide himself friends for the day of adversity soon to dawn upon him. The stereotyped question with which he opened his negotiations with the dishonest debtors who were willing to help him defraud his employer, was, “How much owest thou my lord?” It is to some thoughts suggested by this question that I invite your attention. We are all debtors to God. Let us study up our case, look over our accounts, to see how great is our indebtedness to him. We will let the parable help us a little in our investigation.

Let it be remembered that I do not ask this question, "How much owest thou my Lord," with a view to lightening the burden of your debts. This was the steward's object, that is, his apparent object. No priest, bishop or pope has any right to interfere as to God's claims against us, or to make any terms of settlement not laid down in God's Word. This indebtedness is a personal, an individual concern. It follows us like our own shadow; it is as much an individual matter as our eating or our dying. Nor do I ask this question for my own sake. The graceless steward was really aiming at his own ease and profit, through his generosity to his master's debtors. He, like many others, was most selfish when he appeared most generous. He was generous at the expense of another, and so bought the gratitude of his fellow-scoundrels cheaply. Unlike his intent, mine is simply for your profit, that you may know how your account stands between you and your Maker. It is a fact that many men do not know, or care to know, how much they owe to Him of whom we are taught to ask, "Forgive us our debts." Is he an honest man who does business without knowing, or caring to know, the extent of his liabilities? Is it consistent with common honesty for us to ignore God's claims? In business, such criminal carelessness leads to bankruptcy. A noted millionaire in

New York failed some years ago, because he had done business without keeping account of his assets and his liabilities. What better than hopeless, involuntary bankruptcy can be expected by a soul that keeps no reckoning, institutes no examination.

To a few items of God's claims against us, it may be well to call attention. There is his provision bill. He has given us our daily bread all our lives. His sun and his showers have matured the products of the earth, on which our bodies have been sustained. He laid away the coal and iron for our use, ages before we were born. The hand of a beneficent Providence is everywhere manifest. You owe a great debt for board and clothes, your fuel and your fire. No matter though parents and friends have supplied you with these things. This is another item in the bill; for their time belongs to God. In this they have only been his servants. Again, think of his book-bill against you. I say nothing of the religious literature that is the natural product of the revelation God has made. I simply ask you to consider how much you owe for the Bible. Your civil and religious liberty you owe to that book. Were it not for that, you would doubtless be a barbarian surrounded by barbarians. Theodore Parker was not suspected of orthodoxy. Yet he wrote that there is "not a boy nor girl in all Christendom through, but

their life is made better by that Great Book." Once more, how much do you owe your great Master for personal service rendered? He has not left his work entirely to human agencies. "God was manifest in the flesh" that we might be benefited with clearer knowledge of our duty and his love. The whole earthly life of Christ was God's personal service for us. And you are conscious that the Divine Spirit has come to you, not only by the ministry of men, but directly, when there was no one present but you and God. In such hours your condition has been so clearly revealed, your duty made so manifest, your danger so distinctly shown, that you felt that your Maker was speaking to your spirit. Put together the few items we have considered, and tell me, "How much owest thou my Lord."

And now what about settling? You cannot pay up, but you ought to be willing to come to a settlement. At present very favorable terms are offered. Honest debtors can get discharged from their debts. But you must put in all your assets. It will not do to play Ananias, and keep back a part, while professing to give all. You cannot make a fortune by taking advantage of heaven's bankrupt laws. The Great Judge knows whether you make an honest statement or not. You will never feel that your sins are forgiven until you are honest with God. Acknowledge the justice of his claim, give in all

your assets, yourself included, and avail yourself of the Gospel provision for moral bankrupts. Get a full discharge, and begin anew with God as your partner.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: OR, YOUR MISSION.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."—MAT. 11:11.

There is great benefit to be derived from the study of biography. Especially is it to be expected that great men will leave "footsteps in the sands of time," which will richly reward investigation.

John's mission was a peculiar one. No other prophet was called to be the harbinger of the Messiah's speedy appearance. All others saw Christ afar off, or brought him near with the telescope of faith. But John proclaimed the speedy, almost immediate, coming of Christ. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the burden of his prophecy. "There standeth among you one whom ye know not," he said toward the last, and finally he pointed to Jesus as he walked before the eyes of the people, and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God." Yet the great honor involved in being the harbinger of Christ brought with it the need for a strength of character seldom attained by man. "He must increase, but I must decrease," told the devotion, the total absence of envy and murmur-

ing, required of him who went "before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." And the preparatory character of John's labors is noticeable. He was to perfect nothing. He was to be the strong ploughman who was to tear up and turn over the stubborn soil. He was not to live to see the harvest, hardly was he to sow a single seed. But he was to prepare the soil for both sowers and reapers. Such rough-coated, hard-handed, true-souled men have done a vast work towards rendering this world habitable, civilized, Christian. Is it not true that in one sense, every one of us has a special mission in the world? "Every man's life a plan of God," is the way Dr. Bushnell put it. Your work may resemble the work of another, yet there are points of difference. Our work is as varied as our faces. A few features are common, but scarcely any two are exactly alike. No man should ape any other man. "Be thyself," is an exhortation to which all should give heed. The world is suffering for lack of individuality. Men and women are cramping their souls into fashionable or startling molds, instead of giving the fullest play and largest development to their God-given powers. "To thine own self be true; thou canst not then be false to any man."

And, like John, it becomes us not only to have a mission but to understand it. There would seem to be small need of so many misplaced men.

We may, by studying ourselves and our surroundings, by listening for the call of God, find our life work. John knew well his mission. And this understanding of his work aided him to success. Discontent would often be prevented if men were only to become fully persuaded that they were in their proper sphere. Let a man realize that diversity of gifts and variety of labor are the Divine plan: let him reverently ask how and where the interests of humanity and the interests of God's kingdom demand that he should work, and then, whatever the work is, he will get rid of that friction which has worn away so many lives. A man who unduly magnifies his calling and depreciates his own powers, works at a great disadvantage. He is, as it were, frightened at his own shadow. He who despises his vocation and magnifies himself, will do poor work at great expense of nervous and vital force. Running gear should be neither too tight nor too loose. And, though the fit be perfect, should be kept oiled. Many men are in their proper places, the fit is exact, but there is "cutting" continually, for want of knowing their mission, and heartily accepting it. Some also have not succeeded because they have not found their true place. Joseph Cook failed as pastor, but is achieving great success in a larger sphere. John Foster was a failure in preaching, but his "Essays" will live while

there is an English literature. You can name one of the world's greatest statesmen, and one of the world's greatest journalists, both of whom are popularly supposed to have died because the doors of the White House did not swing in at their "Open Sesame." How John the Baptist's full knowledge and hearty acceptance of his appropriate work must have contributed to his contentment. The Jews were ready to receive him for more than he was; but he answered, "I am not the Christ, but am sent before him." And it is no wonder that he succeeded. And success is for all who find their work and do it; who do their work as John did his, without regard to consequences.

Shall we take the time to inquire how this noble man was prepared for his work? Young America wants to do a great work with little or no preparation. He would be master of all trades and Jack of none. He is willing to reap, but has no time to sow. It is to be noted that in John's case much of the preparation was made before he was born. No small part of every man's success or failure is due to antenatal influences. The minds of both John's parents were so wrought upon that they were fitted to send forth the hero-prophet from their home. How few persons are sufficiently enlightened on the transcendent importance of giving to their children a fair start in the race of life.

How few are informed as to their high duties in this matter. Dr. O. W. Holmes, remarking on the saying that a man can do any work if he is "called" early enough, says something to this effect: "True; but early enough, with most of us, would be two or three hundred years before we were born." The line of our ancestry often bounds the possibilities of our life. How solemn, then, the responsibility of parents. How great their opportunities to bless the world through the offspring of their pure bodies and their holy souls.

But this great prophet followed a course of life which developed his inborn capacity and fitted him for his special work. He was a Nazarite, and the vow of a Nazarite was not only one of entire devotion to God, but a pledge against the use of "wine and strong drink." Stimulation of the bodily powers, gratification of the senses, some form of "fast living," has been the bane of men who seemed born to fame and usefulness. On the one rock of alcoholic beverages how many noble souls have been wrecked. Though nobly born and well-bred, true success awaits only him who exercises his self-denial by refusing to pamper his body. If the body subjects the soul to its rule in the days of youth, it is doubtful whether the "jubilee" will ever come, when the slavish chains shall be broken. Could the young but realize that the glory of

manhood and the comfort of old age depend largely on youthful abstinence from the "lusts of the flesh," the "rising generation" might continue to rise. But John was an ascetic as well as a Nazarite. He "was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." For the hard, rough work before him, nothing could have better fitted him. And here also is a lesson for us. Solitude and meditation are necessary to the formation of a grand character. No man can be always in public and maintain his individuality and strength. And note, also, that John did not begin his life-work till he had reached maturity in years and fullness of preparation. And when he burst full-orbed on the vision of the people, they recognized his power. Solitude is not a waste of time. The years of quiet preparation at home, school, or shop, give a mighty impetus to our after life. Moses had a forty-years preparation in the quiet of Midian, as well as forty years of life in the courts of Pharaoh, before God gave him the leadership of Israel. In this fast age we do not take time to make ready and take aim, but fire away with much noise and little effect.

In conclusion, we may say that every true mission has some relation to the kingdom of God. Our highest usefulness and our truest success depend, as did John's, on what we do to "prepare the way of the Lord."

DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

My theme assumes that there will be punishment in the future world for those dying in sin. I am therefore saved the trouble of a discussion of that form of Universalism which limits punishment to this life. In fact, Universalists have largely abandoned the "death and glory" doctrine, and admit, (strange that it should ever have been denied), that man takes his character with him when he moves into the other country. The moral connection between this life and the life to come is generally admitted by the best minds among all classes of Liberal theologians. Says James Freeman Clarke, "Unitarians and Universalists, Theodore Parker and R. W. Emerson, teach retribution, present and future, with a force which leaves little need of additional arguments from orthodoxy."

What are the arguments usually advanced to prove the ultimate salvation of the race? What are the difficulties in the way of accepting them?

One of the commonest arguments is that drawn from the *Fatherhood of God*. We are asked, "Can a merciful father leave his children to perish?" No true parent, we are told, would

consign his child to an eternity of misery. Numberless are the changes rung on this one analogy. Suppose we accept the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood in its broadest sense; what then? Does it follow that God will save all? Do earthly parents always succeed in saving their sons from ruin? "No, but the analogy is, of course, imperfect, for God is infinite and man is finite." Very well; if the analogy is imperfect at some point, how do you prove that it is not imperfect at the very point which must bear all the strain of your argument? But have not Liberal Christians, and, perhaps, orthodox Christians as well, gone beyond Bible warrant in this matter of the Divine paternity? Do the Scriptures say much of this Fatherhood as existing simply because man is God's creature, and was made in His likeness? Do they not tell us that to some who said, "We have one Father, even God," the Master declared, "If God were your Father, ye would love me," and "Ye are of your father, the devil"? Do they not condition the promise, "I will be a Father unto you," on "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate"? "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of *their* Father," seems to imply spiritual resemblance as well as heirship, spiritual resemblance as the *title* to the "kingdom." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," is

far from helpful to the Universalist argument, while the clearest Bible statement of the analogy, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him," is a text whose expressed condition forbids us to lift all men into heaven with the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

We are informed that Universalism is a logical result of the *Perfections of the Divine Nature*. Every attribute of Deity is claimed as an argument in favor of this system. The *justice* of God is said to be impugned by the supposition that so weak a creature as man shall, for the sins of this brief life, suffer forever. To this I reply: (1). It is not to be expected that "so weak a creature as man" should, during "this brief life," be able to "find out the Almighty to perfection." He may be just though you cannot see it. (2). You firmly believe that God is just, yet you are not able to "vindicate the ways of God to man" in this world. It is safe to say that among all the attempts to solve the problem of the existence of evil under the government of a righteous God, from Leibnitz to Bledsoe, no satisfactory Theodicy has been produced. With this question the purest hearts and mightiest intellects have always been perplexed. The attempt of Edward Beecher and others to

solve the problem by assuming the pre-existence of human souls, shows how hard pressed are those who endeavor to demonstrate the Divine Justice to reason, rather than submit the matter to Revelation and faith. Dr. Lyman Beecher was not far out of the way, if, as is reported, he discouraged the publication of his son Edward's "Conflict of Ages," remarking, "My son, if the Almighty has got himself into trouble by allowing evil to come into the world, I do not want any of my children to help him out of it." (3). Whoever heard of adjusting the period of punishment to the length of time employed in the criminal act for which it was inflicted? A petty larceny may take a hundred-fold more time than a murder. Further, if it be the endlessness of punishment that is objected to, it is easy to show that on any principles which admit future punishment at all, the consequences of men's actions are eternal; a man will always be worse off for having sinned. I must confess that sometimes, in considering the demands men make on the Divine justice, it has seemed to me a desirable thing to cast up the other side of the account, and learn whether man owes anything to God. Do we ever consider that there is such a thing as *justice to God*. Are creation, preservation, redemption, worth anything, and do they give him a claim on us? It may be well to weep with Christ, instead of whining with impenitent sinners.

“But ‘God is love,’ and this crowning attribute, this very essence of the divine nature, disproves everlasting punishment.” Surely it is not meant that God’s love conflicts with his justice. It can not be supposed that his love will sully his holiness, destroy his truth, overturn the plans of his wisdom. Love does not always win in this world. “Oh! it has not time enough; it will be sure to win at some remote period in eternity; love is all-powerful.” It is a sad fact that some do not yield to its power, but grow worse and worse under its influence. Now unless God has more love than we know, or exhibits it more clearly than now, continuance in sin will make the sinner less and less likely to be moved by these means. Again, if it is only a question of time, if the sinner must yield at last, why is not the full strength of the motive brought to bear at once, and thus love be saved much of its work, and the sinner all of his suffering? If the suffering be claimed to be disciplinary, then it is really the suffering, employed by love, that is to do the work. Salvation by suffering will come up for consideration by and by.

Again: “God is *omnipotent*, and will not be frustrated by puny man. He will never suffer an eternal hell to mar the harmony of the universe. ‘With God all things are possible,’ even the salvation of the race.” If, then, man can

not frustrate the Divine plans, *sin* must be a part of the plan for this world. Directly or indirectly, God must be its author. But we read that the "Pharisees and lawyers rejected [in margin *frustrated*] the counsel of God;" and though the divine purpose is thus expressed: "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," still we see all men are not saved, do not know the truth. We must admit that, weak as man is, he can frustrate the divine intentions *concerning him*. What a wild notion is this, that omnipotence can save men, that is, make them virtuous. Power cannot produce holiness. You might as well ask how much power could chisel out an *Apollo Belvidere*, or paint a *Transfiguration*. Omnipotence can not *make a character* for one of the weakest of the children of men. The modern doctrine of the "Correlation of Forces" does not include the transmutation of Divine power into human virtue.

Do you say, "God is infinitely wise, and knows just what means to use to bring men to holiness and heaven"? Then, in the name of sinning, suffering humanity, if all is to be resolved into a question of adaptation of means to ends, and there is infinite wisdom to make the adaptation, why is the result so long delayed? Why do men spend a long life in sin, and go to their graves full of iniquity? Why does this world go madly

staggering on, under its burden of woe? If infinite wisdom can devise the means to secure integrity of character in all men, then either God would as soon let the world go on for a while, sinning and suffering, or else he is experimenting to find out the best method of saving the race. If the first, he does not hate sin; if the second, his wisdom is not infinite. The fact is, salvation is not a result of wisely-ordained means, but of man's *use* of God's method. Infinite wisdom made man free; it can not violate his freedom.

It is also argued: "God must have *foreknown* how things would turn out, and he would never have made man, if he had known that a vast number of the race would be eternally lost." Who told you so? Where was it written? Or did God grant you a special revelation on this point? It seems to me the Divine foreknowledge is a question too high, too deep, too long, too broad, for us to grasp so as to reason from it concerning the salvation of the race. We have no more right to mix up this question with man's sin and sufferings in the future, than with sin and consequent suffering here and now. Does a drunken man become sober as soon as he realizes that God foreknew his drinking and drunkenness? Does conscience let go its grip on your soul whenever you reason that your sin was foreknown? So far as man's responsibility, sin and suffering are concerned, it makes no differ-

ence whether God possesses the attribute of foreknowledge or not. It is not a question of the Divine perfections, but of human imperfections.

Leaving the argument from the attributes of God, let us consider the claims made on other grounds. It is said the *provisions of the Gospel* are made for the race, that redemption is universal, that "Jesus Christ offered himself a ransom for all," and "tasted death for every man." True, gloriously true; but so has God provided even beyond the necessities of the race, in things "needful to the body," but while there is waste, there is also want, and men are in need, yes, men *starve* on this earth that groans under the burden of the Divine bounty. God's provision and man's use are two distinct and separate things. "Yet there is room," is a grand text, but it does not prove the untruth of that other saying, found in the same connection, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

How often we meet with this assertion, "The whole spirit of the Gospel is in favor of Universalism." Granted, if you mean that the Gospel breathes the spirit of love and universal benevolence. But if by "the spirit of the Gospel" you mean something that does not dwell in the letter of the Gospel as its body, you concede the falseness of the letter. With you, exegesis is worth nothing; sentiment, everything. Now if

that sentiment does not legitimately grow out of Scripture teaching, if that spirit has no affinity for this body, then the sentiment and spirit are not Christian; for Christianity is an historic religion, a "book-religion." Says Macaulay, "The really efficient weapons with which the philosophers assailed the Evangelical faith were borrowed from the Evangelical morality." I humbly submit the question: Is such a warfare honorable? Is not Gospel theology as authoritative as Gospel morality?

"But the Bible, *rightly interpreted*, teaches Universalism." I have not the time nor the disposition to enter at length upon the exegetical argument. The following points seem to me sufficient: (1). The Christian Church in general has never so understood the Scriptures. (2). The usual methods of argument employed by Universalists, ignore the question of exegesis. Mr. Curry, a Universalist minister of Indiana, published some years ago a sermon on "Endless Punishment," and threw his argument into form: "Because the Bible is the word of God, and endless sin and suffering are inconsistent with the character of God, therefore the Bible does not teach the endless continuance of sin and suffering." Dr. T. B. Thayer and other leading Universalists might be quoted to show that Mr. Curry's argument is of the regular pattern. Dr. J. F. Clarke, denominationally a

Unitarian, but an avowed believer in restoration, thinks "the atheist has done less to dishonor the name of God, than those who teach the eternal punishment of the wicked." Yet the same author admits that while some texts of the New Testament "appear to teach a final, universal restoration," "there are passages in the New Testament which appear to teach never-ending suffering." "In the Epistles of Paul," he says, "there are five or six passages, which appear to teach, or to imply, an ultimate restoration or salvation of all moral beings." His argument against endless punishment is, as indicated by these quotations, not an exegetical one. "The fatherly character of the Almighty" is his main reliance. The usual methods of argument for Universalism, it is safe to say, are not biblical, except so far as inference from Bible doctrine on other subjects gives them a title to that name. And is it not strange that an inference from the Bible doctrine concerning God, should be considered of more value to the Universalist argument, than God's own words on the subject of future punishment? This is certainly an exaltation of reason above Revelation, and is a clear abandonment of the exegetical argument. (3). Let us note some concessions and confessions on the direct teaching of the Bible, that we may see how evidently the letter of Scripture condemns Universalism. Theodore

Parker believed that "The Universe" teaches the salvation of all, but he says, "I think there is not, in the Old Testament, or in the New, a single word that tells this blessed truth, that penitence hereafter shall do any good." The American Unitarian Association declared, at its meeting in 1853, "It is our firm conviction that the final restoration of all is not revealed in the Scriptures." Since the above-named date, I believe this body has never given an expression on this subject. Certainly it has never pronounced in favor of Universalism. Dr. Channing tells us: "On this and on other points, Revelation aims not to give precise information." Dr. E. H. Sears says: "Unitarians do not think Restorationism a doctrine of Revelation, fairly yielded by the interpretation of Scripture." Dr. J. F. Clarke seems to admit that "Scripture does not expressly declare that there is an opportunity in the other life for repentance and pardon," yet he acknowledges, on the same page, that "the question must be answered only from Scripture." The foregoing quotations from non-orthodox sources, might easily be multiplied. They will suffice, however, for samples, and are sufficient to shield us from the charge of bigotry, when we deny that Universalism is a doctrine clearly taught in the Bible, and deducible therefrom by an honest interpretation of the texts directly bearing on this subject.

As to the means of salvation in the future, Universalists have a choice among three views, and each view has its advocates, though one of them seems just now to be meeting with general favor, perhaps because it is a near approach to the Evangelical idea of the condition of salvation.

An opinion, once common, but now obsolescent, that men will be saved by a sovereign act of the Divine will, demands a moment's notice. This notion is no doubt a relic of the Calvinistic views so generally prevalent in this country during the early history of American Universalism. No one who has read the life of Rev. N. Stacy, and others of the old school of Universalists, can have failed to discover the influence of Calvinistic ideas on Universalist theology. There was the old principle of Divine sovereignty, but *general* election was substituted for *particular*, and—*presto!* the whole world would be saved by a Divine volition! Upon this principle of salvation, (as indeed on pure predestinarian principles, by which only a part are *elected*,) the praises sung by a saved soul are of as much value as the words spoken by the \$20,000 talking-machine exhibited by Barnum. And the satisfaction, the happiness, the glory, are only what belong to an automaton. But the theory is so nearly dead that it is unnecessary to do more than wait a little to see it

die. Nor will we weep at the obsequies, for "it is not *our* funeral."

Salvation through suffering, or salvation after the sinner has suffered to the full extent of his demerit, is another way out of hell. This theory has many modifications, but the same objections hold against every form of it, viz.: Suffering, as we see it, has no intrinsic power to purify; this view makes two ways of salvation, one through Christ, and the other through hell-fire; it makes human weakness stronger than Divine power. It thus contradicts Providence, degrades Christ, and overtops the Infinite Wisdom and Love.

But the Universalism of to-day has made an approximation to Arminianism, in its doctrine of free agency, and to the Evangelical churches generally, in its view of salvation through Christ. It holds that offers of mercy and helps to holiness will be extended in the future world, and that, sooner or later, every soul will see that its best interests demand that it shall submit, and that it is sure that no soul will hold out against the grace of God after it sees that its only wisdom is to yield. Salvation, there as here, will be through Christ, on repentance and faith. By this theory, it is supposed, man's agency is not violated. Yet it is easy to see that the Arminian and the Universalist ideas of free will are not *identical*. It is very evident

that the old Calvinistic doctrine of Divine sovereignty is the basis of this type of Universalism. True, Dr. J. F. Clarke admits that "the power of the human will to resist God, is indeed indefinite." Yet he adds: "But the power of love is infinite. Sooner or later, then, in the economy of the ages, all sinners must come back. You may resist God to-day, to-morrow, for a million years; but, sooner or later, you *must* return, obey, repent, and submit."

Akin to these sentiments is the following, from F. D. Maurice's essay on "Eternal Life and Eternal Death:" "I ask no one to pronounce, for I dare not pronounce myself, what are the possibilities of resistance in a human will to the loving will of God. There are times when they seem to me—thinking of myself more than of others, almost infinite. But I know that there is something which must be infinite." It will be seen from these quotations that the Gordian knot of human freedom is cut, not untied. It is absurd to say a free agent *must* at some time yield to God. The fact that man is *free*, a fact resting on the Jachin and Boaz of God's word and man's consciousness, this fact alone is an irrefutable argument against Universalism. A little further development of the doctrine of free will among Universalists, and an entire abandonment of the Calvinism that still lingers with them, will necessitate the abandonment of

Universalism, though the doctrine of future probation should be retained.

But I must bring this investigation to a close. From the ease with which Universalist arguments may be met, from the Scriptural and rational objections to the system, (a part of which, only, have been produced,) from the constitution of the human soul, from the obvious difficulties that lie in the way of any of its various methods of securing the great result, we are prepared to say that Mr. Winchester, himself a Restorationist, spoke a plain truth when he admitted that to believe in Universalism requires more faith than any man needs for his personal salvation, more faith than Abraham, the pattern believer, possessed.

Theodore Parker admitted that Jesus taught the everlasting punishment of the wicked, but refused to accept the doctrine on his authority. Can we who recognize the Divine authority of Jesus, do otherwise than accept what he so plainly taught? And, seeing men's danger, let us be in earnest in our endeavors to rescue them. "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Let us bring the mighty motive of the remediless character of future punishment to bear upon the sinners around us, and we shall see the *use* that can be made of this awful truth.

THE DECALOGUE: INTRODUCTORY WORDS.

“And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.”—DEUTERONOMY 4:12, 13.

The law, as contained in the Ten Commandments, was given under very impressive circumstances. The scene is laid by the historian in a wild, barren, dreary region, where nature seemed in keeping with the severity of the law. Added to the naturally desolate and forbidding character of the bleak granite mountains, were the supernatural manifestations that preceded and accompanied the giving of the law. In Exodus 19:16 we read, “And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that the people that was in the camp trembled.” A thunder-storm in the mountains is a grand and awe-inspiring sight; but it would seem, as Dr. Bush remarks, that “the clangor of an unearthly trumpet was mingled in the din of the elements to deepen the conviction that the whole scene was preternatural.”

Two verses later are the words, "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." The effect on the minds of the people is recorded in Exodus 20:18,19: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.'" We are told in the verse introducing the Decalogue, that "God spake all these words." Again, in our text it is said, "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

The completeness with which the Decalogue sums up human duties, is a proof of its Divine origin. Though given to a rude people, and in an age when men were ignorant of God and unbrotherly to man, the "tables of stone" contained an epitome of man's duty, that the world can never outgrow. The statement of the claims of God on man's service, the doctrine of

the spirituality and the infinite majesty of Jehovah, the teaching that not only do we owe certain duties to God, but that God commands us to do certain duties to our fellow-men—thus making, as Josephus puts it, “morality to be a part of religion”—the comprehensiveness of the few statements of our duties to one another, all these are evidences that God was the author of this law. An infidel who had resolved to read the Bible, read till he had finished the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Here he stopped and meditated; he carefully examined these commandments; he saw that they epitomized all human duty; he considered the intellectual and moral character of the time when this law was given; he asked himself the question, “Where did Moses get that law?” He could find no reasonable answer, except that given by Moses, namely, that the author of the law was God. The infidel was an infidel no longer.

Our Savior quoted from the words written by Moses, a remarkable compend of the Decalogue. As recorded in Matthew 22:35-40, the account reads thus: “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, ‘Master, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said unto him, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great command-

ment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'”

This answer of the Master not only shows that there are two classes of duties, but it teaches that “love is the fulfilling of the law.” Nearly all of the commandments are prohibitions; they state our duties negatively, by forbidding sins against God and man. Our Savior here states those duties positively, and the “second” commandment of the great two is “like unto” the first, for love is the essence of both. As John teaches in his First Epistle, love to God and love to man are inseparable duties: piety and morality are parts of one great whole, both being enjoined by Divine authority. As he expresses it in I John 4:21, “This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”

The moral law, summed up in the Decalogue, is of universal and perpetual obligation. The ceremonial law was only for the Hebrew nation, and was designed to be fulfilled and “done away in Christ”; but the law that teaches the duty of love to God and man, is evidenced by its nature to be for all men and all time, yea, for eternity: because, without the observance of the “law of love,” heaven would be an impossibility. Moreover, the New Testament re-enacts

the moral law, not only giving it the solemn sanctions of the Son of God and his apostles, but amplifying its meaning, enlarging its scope, multiplying its applications, and revealing its deep spiritual significance. We are living in the Christian dispensation, and we can not, if we would, limit the moral law to outward observance alone; we are enlightened, and the law is enlightened by the shining of Christ's teachings upon it. We must read the Old Testament in the light of the New; we must add the spirit to the letter; we must, in studying the Decalogue as to what it means for us, ask how Christ interpreted it.

We do not seek life by the study and the keeping of the law; we look to the law for a comprehensive statement of our duties, for the quickening of our moral faculties, for conviction of sin—because it is evident we “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” when we measure ourselves by this perfect standard. The law is, as Paul said, a “ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,” but the Gospel is a “ministration of the spirit” and a “ministration of righteousness.” We may, therefore, stand without fear by quaking Sinai, with its “blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words,” if Christ, who “hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,” stands by us, and dwells

in us as a saving power. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

It is noteworthy that throughout the Decalogue the singular number is used. God does not say, "Ye shall not," but "*Thou* shalt not." The moral law is not addressed to men in general, but to each man in particular; and we are told, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." So the saving application of the Gospel depends on individual repentance and faith. Friend, "Wilt *thou* be made whole?"

JEHOVAH SUPREME: OR, THE FIRST COM-
MANDMENT.

EXODUS 20:3.

The text reads, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The meaning evidently is, that the great God expects unswerving loyalty from his subjects, undivided service from his worshipers. No other being or object must be permitted to supplant him in the affections of his creatures.

There was great reason for this commandment when it was spoken from Sinai. The world was full of gods. A multitude of deities were worshiped, often by the same nation and the same individual. There were not only national gods, but gods of the hills, gods of the valleys, gods of the sea, gods of the woods, gods of all sorts, sizes and powers. Polytheism was in the air. Besides, the Hebrew nation was just out of Egypt, where Jehovah, who had been worshiped by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was unknown, but where Isis and Osiris, and other deities received the homage of the people. Four hundred years the Hebrew nation had been subjected to Egyptian influence, and much of that time they

were in bondage. It was to be expected that these freedmen would be mentally weak, and morally and religiously debased, and, therefore, in great need of plain teaching and strict commandments as to the very elements of worship. Besides the natural tendency of fallen man towards polytheism, they had had an evil education, and would, even in the land of promise, be surrounded by nations who had many gods but knew not Jehovah, the true God. Specially fitting was it, then, that the first commandment should prohibit to the Israelites the sin of their nature, the sin of their times, the sin of their neighbors.

But this commandment seems to belong at the beginning, from its nature, and from human nature in all ages. The foundation of religious and moral character is laid in the text. The true God must be recognized, and his claims to service admitted to be supreme. To worship him as one of our gods, to give him a secondary, or even lower place, in our affections and our plans, is abomination to him, and ruin to us.

The world has always been in a thousand-fold more danger from polytheism than from atheism. In spirit, and on its positive side, as a command to love and worship the true God, the text forbids atheism as well as polytheism; but in form, the commandment is directed only against hav-

ing many gods, not against having no God. There were no atheists then; there never have been many, and there never will be many. Man is, by nature and necessity, a worshiper. Only a "select few" find it possible to be atheists, or to approximate atheism. These are usually fractions of manhood, who have, "with logical scissors, cut the nerve of the moral life." The genuine atheist is destitute of the most distinguishing part of a complete human nature. Man has so much to pray for, is so ignorant and dependent, is so burdened with sin and sorrow, is so interested in the great question of life beyond the grave, that his nature and his experiences are a perpetual protest against atheism.

The grounds of Jehovah's claims to supremacy in service, worship and love, are set forth in the verse preceding the text: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The word LORD, used in this verse, as always when it is printed in the Old Testament in small capitals, is more properly translated, Jehovah. According to some of the best Hebrew scholars, the name Jehovah (or "Yahveh," as some give it) "natively denotes not only God's eternal existence, but also his unchangeable truth and omnipotent power." It is, as it were, God's "proper name," and especially sets forth his eternal and immutable existence. It therefore teaches

that he is "before all things, and by him all things consist;" that all things were made by him, and all life proceeds from him. The first ground of God's claim to supreme worship is, then, that he is the First of all beings, the Author of all life. "In him we live and move and have our being." "His greatness is unsearchable;" and he whose mind and heart are most cultivated, who is best informed as to God's works and ways, will have the highest and truest conceptions of the infinite Jehovah, and will naturally yield to him the worship and service which he claims. Some of the most devout of men have been those whose lives have been largely given to the study of nature; "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth his handiwork." King of kings, Lord of lords, Soul of all life, Author of our existence, has he not the right to say, "Thou shall have no other gods before me"?

The second ground on which the claims for supreme worship to Jehovah are based, is his covenant: "I am Jehovah, *thy God*." Moses calls the tables of stone the "tables of the covenant." In Deuteronomy, 5:2,3, he uses these words, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." That covenant was made with the Israelitish nation; and by

reason of it, every Israelite enjoyed certain privileges. But God had previously made a covenant with Abraham, the father of that nation, and the blessings of that covenant continued to his descendants. That Abrahamic covenant was the seed of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the fruit. The New Testament, as we call it, is, more literally, the New Covenant. And this "better covenant which was established upon better promises," is that under which we are born; its privileges and promises, its light and life, its comfort and hope, have made us all Christians, as distinguished from heathens, or Mohammedans, or followers of any other false faith. But God has claims to our supreme service, growing out of these covenant blessings. Let us not forget the love manifested to us as it is expressed in the Savior's words, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Truly the Lord may say to every one of us "I am Jehovah, *thy God*." Will each of us reply, "Lord, I am thy servant, thy worshiper"?

One more ground of Jehovah's claims to supreme love, is stated: "Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." In other words, God's care, as manifested in his providence, his deliverance of the people from their afflictions and dangers, his provision of manna to supply their daily need,

his guiding pillar—cloud by day and fire by night—these great blessings called for the fullest love and heartiest service of his ancient people. But are not we as greatly indebted to the same God for many deliverances, for an unfailing supply of our “daily bread,” for guidance during the years of our life’s journey, for protection from a thousand threatening ills? Not only the Christian, but every man who will enter upon an honest review of the mercies of his life, will be led to say, ‘Hitherto hath the Lord been my helper.’ The Son of God taught that our Heavenly Father “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust,” and that he is “kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Our daily mercies have come though we have not thanked the Giver or recognized his existence. Is it not time we should become thoughtful, thankful, penitent, godly? Our lives have been constantly under God’s care. For this reason, we ought to acknowledge Jehovah as supreme. The three reasons, then, for our observing this first commandment, are, God’s nature, his covenant, and his providence. By this three-fold cord of creation, redemption, preservation, let us bind ourselves to the duty of worshiping and serving him who is “God alone.”

The frequent violations of this commandment by the ancient Israelites are so familiar to all

readers of the Bible that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. We are more concerned in considering how we worship and serve "other gods." Those untutored—or, rather, ill-taught—ancients believed in many gods; "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." We have no belief in any other god except Jehovah, yet we are often guilty of substituting some person or object in the place the true God should occupy. Are we supremely selfish? Then we worship our own mean selves. Are our hearts' best affections placed on some loved one for whose sake we live and labor, and without whom life would be unmeaning and undersirable? Then have we "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and have "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." Are we worldlings, worshipping at the shrine of Mammon? Truly has it been said, "Gold is the only power which receives universal homage. It is worshipped in all lands without a single temple, and by all classes without a single hypocrite." A startling truth dwells in that oft-quoted expression of Washington Irving, "The Almighty Dollar." If we put genius, culture, pleasure, science, nature, any object of admiration or pursuit of life, into the first place, which God claims

for himself, we are violators of this commandment. Let us give to all proper objects a place in our thought, our affections, our service; but let us give them their proper place, as the good gifts of our kind Father. Let us love him more for these gifts of his love. Let us give Jehovah the best place in our affections, and he will give us the best place in the universe, heaven, as our eternal home.

IDOLATRY FORBIDDEN: OR, THE SECOND
COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS 20:4-6.

The text prohibits the making or the using of images as objects of worship or aids to worship. The word idolatry means the worship of images or representations. This commandment is, therefore, specially aimed at idolatry, which has been, and is, the most common method of worship. The great majority of men are so grossly material, so unspiritual, that they want something visible to represent the invisible Being whom they adore. Shortly after this commandment was spoken from Sinai, the Israelites, encamped at the foot of the mount that had burned and shaken with the presence of Jehovah, said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us." Moses was in the mount, receiving from God the "patterns of things in the heavens," according to which the "tent of meeting" was to be constructed, and the worship of God ordered. Moses stood to the people as the representative of Jehovah. His long absence made them uneasy, and they seemed to fear he would not return. No other man could

take his place: hence they wanted a god, or gods, made, that they might have some visible representation of God. No doubt the mass of the people worshiped the image, or idol, that Aaron made, without considering it as only an image; for after Aaron had made the golden calf (an Egyptian form of idol), the people said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Aaron looked upon it differently, for he "made proclamation and said, 'To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.'" But when the feast-day came, the people offered sacrifices to the idol, and engaged in the usual immoral practices of idolatrous worship.

In this signal, speedy and daring violation of the second commandment, we may see the gross character of the people, and we may also learn some of the reasons underlying this prohibition. The first reason is that the worshiper is sure to consider the image as possessing, more or less, the nature of a god: it localizes his deity; his imagination endows it with supernatural powers; he looks upon his idol not only as a sacred object, but as a superior being. It is impossible for a worshiper to use any image to aid him in worship, without its becoming somewhat essential to his worship, and, therefore, possessed of some superhuman or talismanic, if not divine, power. This is true of a crucifix, as well as of a golden calf. A second reason comes to light

in the incident referred to, namely, idolatry and immorality are almost inseparable. The rites and the accompaniments of idolatrous worship in the ancient world were such as would almost make an idol blush. There is a philosophy underlying this connection of debased morals with debasing superstition. Both are forms of sensualism, animalism. No one can have low thoughts of God and high thoughts of man; no man can be spiritual who worships a material god. This is one of the evident results of creed on conduct, of worship on character. A man is more surely known by the god he worships than by the company he keeps.

In the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses gives a third reason for the prohibition of idols. "Ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." These words are followed by an explicit warning against the use of graven images. Though Sinai quaked and burned, though darkness and tempest, trumpet-blast and mighty voice, proved that God was there, yet no *form* appeared; there was nothing seen of the Almighty which would make it possible to represent him by any image. And this reason against the use of idols is a proof of the spirituality of God. We are familiar with the doctrine which the Savior put into the words, "God is a Spirit"; but we can see that the same truth was

revealed to the idolatrous Israelites fifteen hundred years before these words were spoken by our Master.

May we not profitably spend a few minutes in considering this great doctrine, that runs through all the Bible? What a lofty conception of God it affords us. He can not be represented by any image, for nothing of his material creation is like him. He is not material, and, therefore, he is not limited to any locality. Though he honored the tabernacle and the temple by the "cloud of glory" and by the shekinah that manifested his presence, he was not less really present in other places. Though he now meets his people in their assemblies for his worship, he is as truly everywhere, listening to words of prayer and voice of blasphemy, and working continually in providence and nature, as well as in grace.

If God is a Spirit, then man is a spirit, for man is made to worship God and to commune with him. We have bodies, but we are spirits. Jehovah is called by Moses, "The God of the spirits of all flesh." Paul argues from man's spirituality the Spirituality of God: "Forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Alas! how many there are who forget their own true nature; who seem to have a

“downright appetite to mix with mud;” who never forget their bodies, but seldom think of their souls; who close their eyes only to sleep, never close them to commune with the invisible God. If such men would only spend five minutes a day alone, thinking of God, of their own higher nature, they would soon, by listening, hear God speaking to their spirits, and they would soon begin to speak to God in prayer. Unsaved friend, dare you try the experiment?

If man is a spirit, and is thus related to God, then there is a spiritual world where we shall have as real an existence as that we now possess. Our mode of existence will be changed, but consciousness will continue without interruption. Does that bring an unwelcome truth, because you have not cultivated your spiritual nature, and because the thought of death is always unpleasant to you? Then it is surely time for you to be getting ready for the journey we all must make.

As the first commandment is preceded by a statement which gives the grounds on which it rests, so the second commandment is followed by some words showing God’s strong disapproval of idolatry, and his kindness to those who prove their love to him by keeping his commandments. “For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth gen-

eration of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." No man can sin against God without involving his descendants in the results of his sin. Providence and nature corroborate the seemingly harsh threat just quoted. But notice how "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment": Jehovah shows mercy to thousands, or, to the thousandth generation of them that love him. Be it ours to heed, for our children's sake, as well as for our own, the words of the Lord Jesus, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

PROFANE SWEARING: OR, THE THIRD
COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS 20:7.

The words of this commandment contain both prohibition and penalty: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Let us define our terms. An irreverent or unnecessary use of God's name, without a "by," is so near our subject as to be practically one with it. Good Christian people are sometimes heard in common conversation to say "Good Lord," "The Lord knows," "Lordy," and other similar expressions, used as flippantly as if the "Great Name" did not command that reverence which is so becoming to us. A colored waiter, attending to the wants of a very profane gentleman at the table, was seen to make a very low bow at every oath. Being asked the reason, he replied: "Massa, I nebber hear that Great Name but it fills my soul wid awe." The use of modified oaths is very common. People will swear by "Golly," "Gum," "Jericho," "Jerusalem," and the like, beginning with a letter of one of the

Divine Names, and then, as if ashamed or afraid to express the profanity that is in their thought, changing the rest of the word to suit their fancy or their custom. Some will "darn" a friend or foe, a person or a thing, who mean as much as others who use the orthodox word. Again, there are old and worn-out oaths which are often used, either because they have lost the rough edge of their original profaneness, or in ignorance of the curse concealed beneath their ancient garb. But common oaths, in modern language, are used to so great an extent as to justify giving them special attention.

The antiquity and the prevalence of profane swearing demand notice. When Job's sons were away feasting, that patriarch offered sacrifices for them, fearing they might have cursed God in their hearts. That good boy, Joseph, learned in Egypt to swear "by the life of Pharoah," who was as much of a god as the common Egyptians knew anything of. Gehazi, Elijah's servant, started after Naaman, with his lie and his greed, saying, "As the Lord liveth, I will run after him and take somewhat of him." Peter emphasized his third denial of his Master, with an oath. Socrates only exhibits the custom of his time, in his oft-recurring "by Jupiter," or "by Juno." Chrysostom, a preacher among the early Christians, rebukes profanity in no less than sixteen of his extant homilies. A friend who spent some

years as a missionary in China, says that although vulgarity and obscenity abound among the heathen, yet they are shocked by the profanity of nominally-Christian people. The clearer our knowledge of God, the greater seems to be the habit of profanity. Our country is especially cursed with the habit of cursing. Foreigners, coming to our shores, soon learn to swear in good English, though otherwise they talk very brokenly.

Profane swearing shows ingratitude. He who "daily loadeth us with benefits" is disregarded, and practically despised. He who bought us with his blood, is treated as though his name were a by-word instead of a refuge for sinners. We sing:

"Jesus the Name high over all,
In hell or earth or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly;"

but that "Name that is above every name" in the heavenly courts, is used by those whom Christ came to save, as if he were the enemy of the race. This is also an ungentlemanly habit. Usually this is acknowledged by refraining from oaths in the presence of ladies. One blatant swearer, who declared with an oath that he knew almost every language, was asked by a lady who was riding in the same coach, if he understood Gaelic. "Certainly." "Then will you be kind enough to swear in that language?" Swearing is a useless vice. No man's character

or estate is improved by it. It is, as Washington characterized it, "mean and low, and without any temptation." The thief, the sensualist, serve the devil for pay; the common swearer serves him for nothing. Added to all these, swearing is a heaven-defying vice. What if God should take the swearer at his word? Instances are not wanting where it would seem this has been done.

The effects of profaneness are evident. We may name, first, irreligiousness. No man can be in the habit of taking God's name in vain, without losing that deep reverence for Jehovah, which is needful to a worshiper. Men who curse, do not pray. Profane swearing paves the way for false swearing; perjury is easy to one who uses the Divine Name as an ordinary expletive. Centuries ago, Hierocles pointed out this tendency. General immorality results from the loosening of the religious bond by profaning God's Name. Thomas Paine said, "He who will swear, will also lie." Benjamin Franklin once buttoned his coat before passing through a crowd of swearers, saying he always guarded his pocket-book when among such men. Profanity soon drives out reverence for God's law, and respect for human law will survive but little longer. Thus we see that the interests of society and the weal of governments reverberate the voice that thundered from Sinai, "Thou

shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

This prohibition implies a command to pray. God's name is to be used, but not in blasphemy; he is to be invoked, but not for curses on our enemies; we are even to "pray for them that despitefully use" us. Not "in vain," but sincerely, reverently, prayerfully, let us speak the name of God. Let us remember these solemn words of the Son of God, spoken in his "Sermon on the Mount," as a comment on this commandment given on Mount Sinai:

"I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, 'Yea, yea, Nay, nay,' for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

THE SIN OF IRREVERENCE: OR, THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:7.

This commandment, as was stated in the preceding sermon, means something more than a prohibition of profane swearing. Of the many phases of the general subject, it seems fitting to select for special consideration that of Irreverence.

God's Name is bound up with many of those things usually called "sacred," and also with some things that ought to be regarded as sacred. The sin of irreverence is usually manifested by a disregard of sacred things, sacred times, and sacred places. One of the common manifestations of irreverence is in jesting with Scripture: using the Word of God to point a joke. Even Christians, yes, even ministers of the Word, are sometimes at fault in this matter. To so use any portion of the Bible as to associate that portion in the mind of others with something ludicrous, or worse, is a breach of the third commandment that may injure others more than it injures the jester himself. The Psalmist wrote, "Thou hast magnified thy Word

above all thy Name," which means, probably, that God's Word is the highest manifestation of himself which he had given to men. This was then true, and is now true except as the living Word, the Son of God, was a more complete manifestation than the written Word. Let us cultivate reverence for the Scriptures, and let us bear in mind that neglect of the Bible involves irreverence, for such neglect is treating the Word as if it were unworthy or unimportant. Reverence for the Book is not shown by keeping an elegant copy free from dust, but in cleansing our minds by frequent reading of the Bible. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."

Disrespect for sacred places, persons and seasons, is an eruption from the same disease of irreverence. Unbecoming conduct in church, profaning the Lord's Day, making or singing parodies on hymns, fall under this head. How depraved or thoughtless must he be, who can travesty the most familiar of sacramental hymns, "Alas, and did my Savior bleed"? Yet many of us have been shocked by that very thing. We show irreverence, also, by despising God's works, complaining of the weather, murmuring at his dealings with us. Once more, we rob God of his honor, in whole or in part, by our false views of his nature and attributes, when Scripture and reason furnish all necessary

means for correcting our views. Says Lord Bacon: "It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely." We should have no small thoughts of the great God.

The causes of irreverence deserve our notice. First comes thoughtlessness. We fall into an irreverent habit, and say and do many things of which we would not be guilty if we were to pause and think. Yet it is none the less a sin to be thoughtless on the most important subjects that can engage our attention. Infidelity and so-called "free-thinking" naturally bear the fruit of irreverence. Our free institutions engender or foster this vice in uncultured or unbalanced minds. With such, liberty means license, equality means superiority. Moses enjoined his people not to revile their rulers, and commanded them to rise up before the hoary head. Our case proves the wisdom of these enactments, by showing that disrespect for age and office produce disregard for God. Our lax family government is another cause. It will not do for us to complain of the strictness of our puritan fathers till we get part way back from the other extreme. It is suggestive, that in Greek, as also in Latin, the same word is used to express filial devotion and reverence for God. Our own word "piety" has this double sense. The breaking of

the fifth commandment logically, naturally, leads to a disregard of the third.

We inquire for the effects of the sin of irreverence. First, we name a general loosening of the ties which bind man to man. The sense of the evil and the danger of sin is destroyed by our disregard of him, the transgression of whose law is sin. Is there a "secret society" known among us, which will receive an atheist to membership? Says Macoy in his dictionary of Free-Masonry: "The symbolical letter 'G'—before which every true mason reverently uncovers his head—is a perpetual condemnation of profanity, impiety and vice." Washington, in his Farewell Address, used the following language: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in the exclusion of religious principle." As to the last part of this quotation, it may be observed that it is a statesman's comment on the re-iterated teaching of the Bible, so well expressed in the familiar text, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." The "unjust judge," who "feared not God, neither regarded man," presents a not uncommon blending of immorality and irreligion. The bearing of irreverence on the secret conduct of men is too evident to require many words. A sense of God's presence,

a feeling of individual responsibility, are necessary to that integrity of character which is the same in public as in private. How great a restraint is therefore wanting to him who has a habit of irreverence and forgets that he might always say with truth, "Thou, God, see'st me." One of our greatest statesmen, being asked to name the greatest thought that ever came into his mind, replied, "The thought of my personal responsibility to God."

THE SABBATH: OR, THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:8.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” is the form in which this commandment is usually quoted. The word “Sabbath” is from the Hebrew, and means rest. The full text of this commandment includes the three verses following the text, and makes week-day labor as well as seventh-day rest a part of this Divine precept. The subject of labor is reserved for treatment by itself, and a few general thoughts on the Sabbath will now claim our attention.

The word “remember” calls the attention of the Israelites to an institution previously established, not now first promulgated. The tenth verse explains the matter by giving the following as the reason for the sacred observance of the Sabbath: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” In the second chapter of Genesis is stated this same reason for the sanctification of the seventh day.

Though the traces of the observance of the Sabbath previous to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, are not so numerous and so clear as to convince all scholars, we may safely say, without entering into the argument, that the record in Genesis and the testimony of sacred and profane history show that the sanctifying of the seventh day was not simply a Jewish institution. And this seems to be the natural meaning of our Savior's words, "The Sabbath was made for man." It was intended for the human race, not for the Hebrew nation alone. As all the other commandments are applicable to all nations and all ages, it is unlikely that this should be local and temporary.

The world-wide application of this commandment is proved by the world-wide need for it. On the face of it, this appears an arbitrary precept, unlike the character of the moral law; but a little study reveals the truth that man's highest good is connected with the observance of the Sabbath.

Man needs a seventh day of rest for his body. Physiologists by the hundreds, including many of the most eminent physicians in America and Europe, have borne testimony to the physical need of the Sabbath. Revolutionary France abrogated the Sabbath and instituted a holiday occurring once in ten days; but a short trial, and the testimony of French

physicians that one rest-day in ten was not enough, led the nation back to the seventh-day rest. Not only the general experience of mankind, but the observation of the effects of a seventh day of rest on working animals, has shown the "sweet reasonableness" of this commandment. Experiments extending through many years on one of the most extensive stage-lines of Europe, where the observation included thousands of horses, proved that that animal can do more and better work when he is given a seventh day of rest, than when he is worked seven days a week; he not only does more in a week, but his laboring-years are increased by giving him a Sabbath. This is a remarkable confirmation of the physical necessity for the Sabbath and of the provision made for beasts of burden in the law. In connection with this commandment are these words: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

Brain-workers need the Sabbath not less than those who are engaged in manual labor. Cole-ridge, Isaac Taylor, and other thinkers and authors, have testified to the benefit they derived from observing the Sabbath. Dr. W. B. Carpenter, of England, the eminent scientist, wrote to

a friend, "My own experience is very strong as to the importance of the complete rest and change of thought once in the week." Dr. John W. Draper, in his "Human Physiology," emphasizes the value of the Sabbath to all classes, but specially as giving rest to the brain. No doubt the health of many clergymen gives way because they take no day in the week for rest from the brain-work and the anxiety of their calling. As their duties demand mental activity on the Lord's Day, they should unbend and rest their minds regularly on some other day of the week.

The domestic and social advantages of the Sabbath are great. Many fathers seldom see their children awake during the six work-days. In some families, children are obliged to work to aid in earning a living. The Sabbath is a day of family re-union. The habit of resting, of washing up and dressing up, has a tendency to cultivate our social instincts, and to lessen the selfishness and worldliness produced by the "everlasting grind" of daily toil.

The Sabbath is the poor man's friend. The labor-market is glutted. A weekly day of rest costs the poor man nothing, for, if the Sabbath were done away with, he would get no more for seven days' work than he now gets for six days' work.

Added to these and other blessings of the Sabbath is its moral and religious value. An emi-

nent clergyman thinks nine-tenths of all Christian work is done on the Sabbath. Certain it is that religious helps and privileges abound on that day. The preaching and teaching of God's Word, the meetings for prayer and religious counsel, the leisure for such reading and meditation as shall profit the soul, make the day well adapted for spiritual growth. The majority of men become more or less secularized during the six days of toil: the Sabbath reminds them of their moral and religious duties. The nourishment of men's spiritual life, and the continuance of the Church of Christ, are largely dependent on the maintenance and the right use of the Christian Sabbath.

The secularization of the Sabbath is a great and growing evil. The process is not so much by giving the day to labor, as by devoting it to pleasure-seeking, thus making God's Holy Day man's holiday. Multitudes seem to forget that the Sabbath is to be kept "holy," that God not only blessed the seventh day, but "sanctified it," that is, set it apart for a holy use. The observance of a weekly holiday is not obedience to this commandment, but is a perversion of one of God's best gifts. The use for selfish and worldly purposes of this sacred day is a sin against God and a great injury to our own souls. We thus degrade life by using it all for our lower nature, and are in danger of forgetting our higher du-

ties and of neglecting the great question of our eternal destiny. We can not use the Lord's Day in reading the Sunday papers and other secular or demoralizing literature, and feel that we have nourished our spiritual life. We can not give that day to the pursuit of pleasure without proving ourselves "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

The Christian church must continue to sound the alarm as to this degradation of holy time, and it must also see that the services of God's house and the example of God's people are in keeping with the letter and the spirit of this commandment. Let all, but especially Christians, listen to the Lord's words as recorded in the fifty-eighth of Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

LABOR THE LAW OF LIFE: OR, THE
FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:9.

This commandment enjoins rest, but it also directs us to labor. Work is as necessary as worship: nay, work done in the right way and in the right spirit, is worship; for it is a part of the service of God.

The words, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," follow immediately after the words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." And it is worthy of note that there is the same authority enjoining labor for six days, and prohibiting it on the seventh day. The Divine Law enwraps every day of life. In the truest sense, all days should be religious, and none secular. And true religion is better manifested by the proper observance of the moral law on the six work-days, than by the most careful attention to the ceremonial law on the Sabbath. The history of the world shows how easily religion degenerates into ritualism. It has been observed that on the Sabbath the offerings of the Jews were not different from those

made on the other days, but that they were double the number or quantity, thus marking the seventh day as "the day of days," without degrading the six days given to labor. And the Divine example is so referred to as to apply to work-days as well as to the rest-day: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Had the Almighty always kept Sabbath, the universe would never have sprung into being. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said the Master. There is a sacredness in toil when we study the example of the Divine Workman who fashioned the worlds, and of his Divine Son, known among his townsmen as "the carpenter." Physiologists assure us that the keeping of a seventh day of rest is in harmony with man's physical constitution. It was fitting, then, that the law written in man's nature should be engraved on the tables of stone. But those tables also record God's ordinance of labor. Let us examine this ordinance to see if "earth and heaven agree."

The world is made in accordance with this law. Harvests of valuable grains do not grow spontaneously. The mineral wealth of the earth does not lie scattered over its surface. Almost anything can be had for labor; little or nothing without it. Valuable mental and moral acquisitions must be made by effort.

Truth and character do not lie around loose. The needs of man prove the law. Something to eat he must have. Shelter, clothing, home comforts, are a necessity of civilized life. The law given by Paul, "If any man would not work, neither should he eat," is of general application. A world of tramps and idlers would soon die out. The health and harmony of man's nature demand labor. Dyspepsia, gout, general debility, are often God's mark on us for disobedience to the command of the text. The mind should be employed as well as the body. Man only gains a healthy and harmonious development by mental as well as physical labor. Literary men, as a class, are long-lived. The constitution of human society proves the law. We must not only "look out for number one," but for our families, friends, neighbors, everybody. Indeed, our own interests require that we labor for others that others may labor for us. It was true in a certain case, that "it took nine tailors to make a man." It takes the labor of more than ninety and nine to keep any one of us comfortable. We are dependent on the products of many trades and callings.

This necessity of labor has not been produced by the "Fall." God put Adam in the garden to "dress it," before sin made labor a curse. Laziness, not labor, is a result of sin. Some suppose laziness is "original sin." Sin has increased the

vexations of labor. Toil and weariness are in one sense a curse, yet this curse of toil is rather a restraint on vice, than a punishment for sin. Idleness is the parent of almost all forms of vice. In the old fable, Satan is represented as changing his bait to catch different kinds of men, but "the idler bit at the naked hook." A man can not long be a tramp and remain honest. The driver of a mule team withdrew from the church because "religion was incompatible with his vocation." Vagrancy and integrity are incompatible. Let the burden of labor be lifted from the world, and more evils than were in Pandora's box would come upon society. It is the necessity of labor that prevents the utter overthrow of the foundations of society.

The "Labor Question" will be more speedily solved if men give heed to the following points: First, the law of labor is universal. No man able to work has a right to be idle if employment of brain or hand can be found. Secondly, the saying, "The world owes me a living" is false. The world is not in debt, but will pay a living to those who earn it. Thirdly, labor is not degrading, but ennobling, since it is obedience to the Divine law. Lastly, employers and employed should be fellow-workers under a common law, recognizing their responsibility to the "Master in heaven." Sin is the worst toil. Christ furnishes the only rest, the true Sabbath

of the soul. Hear him: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This is a work-day world. The Sabbath of eternal rest awaits those who do the work of life so as to earn the Lord's "Well done." "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest."

FILIAL DUTIES: OR, THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:12.

The fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," appertains to the duties between superiors and inferiors, and is extended in the New Testament, as indeed by the law of Moses, to duties between masters and servants, teachers and pupils, rulers and subjects. For our present purpose, we limit its signification to the meaning that lies on the surface.

That we owe certain duties to our parents, is so clear a doctrine of natural religion, that all nations and all ages of the world have had something like a correct view of it. A degraded tribe in Africa has a saying like this. "Strike me, but do not speak ill of my mother." This commandment is an illustration of the Scriptural enforcement of duties discovered by the light of nature. Yet it is something more: it is a re-statement in plain language of a truth which needed to be brought more clearly before the mind of man.

In our country, at this time, it would be well to have this law, which was delivered amid the

thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, taken up by pulpit and press. Certainly we have, in this matter, got clear ahead of the Bible. (We are a "fast" people.) There once occurred a case in which, by peculiar intermarriages, a child became his own grandfather. But there are many instances in our own lax-governed homes, where a boy is, to all practical purposes, his father's father, and hence his own grandfather.

The word "honor," used in the text, is very weighty and comprehensive. It certainly includes obedience. It is a wise plan of the All-Father, which has so constituted human relations that age and experience, which can not be transmitted to our children, may yet be available to them early in life, by parental counsel and authority. The most unquestioning obedience is the truest wisdom, as well as the duty, of our early years. Obedience, to be of any value, must be cheerful and hearty. Respect and deference, in word and action, are taught by the text. No child should ever manifest disrespect for his parents, or allow others to speak against them in his presence, without reproof. All such titles as "the old man," "the governor," "the old woman," are to be avoided. There is no prescribed limit at which this duty may cease. When we attain our majority, when we settle in life, it is God's order that then "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave

unto his wife." Still we should look to them for counsel, and in every way show our respect. Especially should we provide, if necessary, for the comfortable and respectable maintenance of our parents, should they live to be old. How sad that some men, having secured culture, position, wealth, by the toils and sacrifices of their parents, should be ashamed of the plain and uncouth ways of those to whom, under God, they owe all that they are. Such cases show the need of Solomon's caution, "Despise not thy mother when she is old." Those hands are misshapen, those limbs are rheumatic, that form is bowed, because your interests were dearer than comfort and ease to your mother. Your father is poor, because he has spent what would now be a fortune, for your support and education. Cheer their declining days by every means within your power. It must not be forgotten that we owe all the duties named, not on account of the excellences and virtues of our parents, but because of their relation to us.

The reasons for thus honoring our parents are, first, that God's Word has made it our duty. Not only has this duty been exalted to the front rank by making it the subject of one of the ten commandments, but in various places in Scripture, and in many ways, this duty is urged upon us. The law and the gospel, precept and promise, blessing and cursing, good

and evil examples, prove the importance of this subject. Paul calls this "the first commandment with promise." The promise is, "That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." To this the addition is made, in the fifth of Deuteronomy, "That it may go well with thee." The descendants of Jonadab the son of Rechab, were commended for filial obedience, and a blessing pronounced on them which, it would seem, has not yet, after 2,500 years, spent its force. Justice and gratitude join with the Bible in enforcing this duty. We owe more to our parents than we can ever repay; more than we can ever know or appreciate, unless we watch over the helpless infancy, inexperienced childhood, headstrong youth, of those who call us father or mother. But for the incessant care, the unwearied love, the almost infinite patience, of your parents, the life God gave you through them would long ago have ceased, or have become a curse. Let David's sad lament over rebellious Absalom tell the quenchless fire of a father's love. Let Rizpah, watching all summer, her bed the rock, her covering sackcloth, to see that bird and beast should not devour the bodies of her sons who were hanged, speak of the undying affection of a mother. Oh! you whose parents still linger on earth, make haste to ask their pardon for your ingratitude, neglect and disobedience.

Give them no further need of that sad reflection, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child."

The disregard of this duty is sure to produce general insubordination. The law of the land will be defied by those who do not submit to the law of home. The future historian, should he be compelled to write "The Decline and Fall of the American Republic," will no doubt point a moral by showing how the lawlessness which produced our national ruin, had its birth in families, and, having attained its full proportions, overturned the temple of liberty, perishing itself in the ruin it had wrought.

The religious bearing—perhaps it were better to say the religious nature—of this commandment is evident. Note the place of this subject in the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments are usually divided into "two tables," the first table relating to our duty to God, the second covering our various duties to our fellow-men. It is generally considered that the first four commandments teach our duty to God. This division puts the duty of honoring our parents at the head of all our duties to men, it being taught in the first commandment of the second table. In the very next chapter of Exodus, are these words: "He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Our Savior quoted these words in connection with the

fifth commandment, when he rebuked the Pharisees for saying that a man might be freed from his duty to his parents by devoting his life to religious pursuits. Nay, more: our Savior honored this commandment by observing it. Though he was able, at the age of twelve years, to interest and astonish the Jewish teachers by "his understanding and answers," yet, when Mary and Joseph "found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," the record tells us, "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." And how sublime was his conduct, when, on the cross, he provided for the future comfort of his mother by putting her in the care of the beloved John.

Some theologians consider this commandment the last in the first table, thus making five in each table, and classing the honoring of our parents with our duties to God. In several places in the Bible our duty to our parents appears to be taught as religious, rather than moral. It is classed with the fourth commandment in Leviticus 19:3: "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths." There are several remarkable expressions as to the religiousness of this duty, in Paul's epistles. In Ephesians we read, "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*; for this is

right." In Colossians the duty is thus set forth: "Children, obey your parents in all things; *for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.*" In the fifth chapter of his first letter to Timothy, the apostle throws a flood of light on this phase of the subject. I will quote from the Revised Version, as it brings out the thought with great distinctness: "But if any widow have children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God." Thus is filial duty made the beginning of, and so a part of, our duty to God.

To parents, I commend, in this connection, these words from F. W. Robertson's thirty-second lecture on Corinthians: "Again, there is another mistake made by those who demand the love of God from a child. The time does come to every child, as it came to the childhood of Christ, when the love of the earthly parent is felt to be second to the love of the Heavenly Father; but *this is not the first*, 'for that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural.' It is true, there have been cases where children have given striking proof of love to God, but these, even to a proverb, die young, because they are precocious, unnatural, forced; and God never forces character. For a time the father represents God, is in the place of God to the child. He is to train the affections which

afterwards shall be given to God; and the brother those which shall expand hereafter for Christ. Like the trellis round which the tendrils clasp till they are fit to transplant, so are the powers of love within the child supported and strengthened as he leans upon his father, till they are mature enough to stand alone for God. And you can not reverse this without great peril to the child's spiritual nature."

THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE: OR, THE
SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:13.

The sixth commandment reads: "Thou shalt not kill." We too often assume that nothing is forbidden, except murder in the first degree. But the very letter of the law, to say nothing of its spirit, is adverse to such restriction. This prohibition includes what is commonly called murder, as also self-murder, or suicide. In the light of the Mosaic code, we know that capital punishment, inflicted by lawful authority, is not forbidden; nor is it unlawful to take the life of a fellow-man when necessary for self-defense. The laws of God and man authorize us to kill a man who is discovered breaking into our house in the night.

Some of the wisest and most virtuous of the ancient Romans taught that suicide is justifiable, as a man has control of his own life, and may end it when he pleases. Not a few of the best men of those times left the world by their own choice and their own hand. Indeed, some believed and taught that suicide is a virtue.

The text, in common with many other Scripture passages, puts a value and a sacredness on life. It recognizes God as the Author of life, and considers his gift as too valuable to be thrown away. And as we did not give life to ourselves, we have no right to take our own lives. Let it be said of us when we have left the world, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Consider the reason attached to God's command to Noah: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; *for in the image of God made he man.*" It would be well for us to try to discover how much we owe to the Bible for our clearest views of the sanctity of life. And it would be well for us who would never think of taking our own lives or the lives of others, by any summary process, to quit our killing by inches. Let us not forget that life is mainly valuable because we are here to prepare for the Hereafter. Man is great because he is immortal. Sin is great, because we are accountable.

This commandment is violated as regards one's own life, by the intemperate. Alcohol as a beverage is a foe to life. It not only cuts short one's days, but, in many cases, makes a man as good as dead while his life continues. Intemperance in eating shortens life. The Bible puts drunkards and gluttons into the same list. When the crusade against rum and tobacco has

resulted in sweet breath, clean mouths and clear brains for all, we may gather the forces for an attack on the kitchen and the dining-room. For not only gluttony, but carelessness and ignorance in the preparation and use of food, are hurrying us to our graves. Sensuality in all its forms rots out the life of body and soul. Overwork, of brain or muscle, is a sin against life. How many have been buried in cemeteries or insane asylums by allowing their business to overdraw on their time and strength. How often has the insane greed for gold, urging a man beyond his powers, leading him to deny himself of needed rest and sleep, snapped the brittle thread of life. The excitement of politics has destroyed some of our ablest statesmen. Ignorance of the laws of life and health is, in our day and country, a breach of this commandment. How many intelligent people know nothing of the anatomy of their bodies or of the functions of their different parts, or of the nature of the different articles of daily food. A little time spent in learning that the human race have stomachs and not gizzards, and a few other practical lessons in anatomy, physiology and hygiene, would prolong the lives of many people. Unhealthy modes of dress may make one look "killing," but they are killing in a literal sense. Foolhardiness in exposing ourselves to unnecessary danger, violates this law. To risk life to save

life, or to save anything more valuable than life, is noble; but he who rushes into danger needlessly is guilty. The man who loses his life in attempting to rescue a drowning man does a noble act. But he who is drowned in attempting, for money or fame, an almost impossible feat in swimming, or a "Sam-Patch" plunge, goes into the next world guilty of his own blood.

As concerns the lives of our fellow-men, this law is broken by liquor-dealers. Such deal out poison by the glass, and kill people piecemeal. Two centuries ago there was a poisoning mania in some portions of Europe. Charles Mackay has written a sketch on the subject, entitled, "The Slow Poisoners." The power of law and the wrath of the people at last put a stop to this nefarious business. "In the 21st year of Henry VIII an act was passed, rendering it high treason. Those found guilty of it, were to be boiled to death." How strange that places for slow poisoning should be suffered, and even patronized by the people, and licensed by the State. Careless railroad men, dishonest architects and builders, incompetent druggists and physicians are also guilty. What utter disregard of human life is exhibited by all such. What horrible accounts have we all read of deaths caused by reckless trainmen. Could the dead speak, some physicians, unworthy of their

high calling, would be accused of murder. What a holocaust of human victims is occasionally offered in some church, hall, or theater, on account of the dishonesty or the criminal neglect of proprietors and builders. How many have been burned alive in public places because of insufficient provision for a speedy egress, or because the doors opened inward instead of outward. Fond mothers sacrifice their children for the sake of exhibiting their charms. A physician of eminence has estimated that an appalling number of children die each year from the exposure of their beautiful little arms. Unnatural mothers guilty of ante-natal murder, as also all the abettors of their crime, have a terrible reckoning to meet.

The indulgence of hatred, revenge, and kindred passions, is expressly forbidden in the Bible, as belonging to the same class of sins. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment;' but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that

thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Notice how the Savior in these words changes the negative to a positive; he teaches not only that wrong feelings and wrong words are a violation of the sixth commandment, but that we must cultivate brotherliness, and that we must be reconciled to our brother before our offering to God will be acceptable.

There is such a thing as soul-murder. Every man who destroys or injures the spiritual life of a fellow-being, is guilty of soul-murder. In a measure, Christians who fail in their duty to others, are responsible for the spiritual death that accompanies and follows sin, in all whom their neglect involves. And how many are guilty as soul-suicides. Willfully and knowingly, if not purposely, they destroy their own souls; they "choose death rather than life," and lose the life of heaven by refusing to lead a heavenly life on earth.

MARRIAGE AND HOME: OR, THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:14.

The words, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," are a condemnation and a prohibition of the sin of impurity in all its forms and in every degree; but the worst form and the highest degree of that sin are specially named in the text. This commandment is, therefore, particularly designed to guard the oldest of God's institutions for the human race, and the sacred spot where that institution flourishes—of course I refer to Marriage and Home.

The Bible speaks, perhaps, more frequently and more emphatically on this subject than on any other pertaining to the conduct of life. The scriptural account of the origin of marriage may be found in the second chapter of Genesis. The Savior's appeal to this account, and his comments on it, are recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew.

It is evident that marriage is divinely ordained. "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him," that

is, a help suited to him: woman is the exact complement and counterpart of man; sex is manifest even in mind. Our God-given instincts are in harmony with this law of the Bible. The purest, fullest love, is that which issues in marriage, and, abiding the test of closest intimacy, proves itself perpetual. In the light of Bible teaching, we may discover the mistake of those who devote themselves to a life of celibacy under the impression that only thus can superior sanctity be obtained. The religion of the Bible is not a religion of asceticism. St. Paul warns us against these delusions. He declares that it is a work of those who "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," to forbid marriage and command to abstain from meats. "Marriage is honorable in all," is a text which religious celibates seem to have overlooked. We can easily see, from the standpoint of this primeval institution, that "single blessedness" is, as a rule, "single wretchedness." Of course this rule has its exceptions, and old bachelors who are not "crusty," and old maids who are not "sour," are to be found. And let it be remembered that the law of marriage is not for children who are unable to care for themselves, but for those sufficiently mature to undertake the responsibilities of a home and family.

True marriage is a union between one man

and one woman. The original institution is not at all in accord with polygamy, or polyandry, or promiscuous concubinage. As stated by Moses and restated by our Lord, the "one flesh" is composed of one husband and one wife. To say nothing of the evils of polygamy, we may simply note the remarkable fact of the numerical equality of the sexes. This equality is next door to absolute in all parts of the world. More males than females are born, but the exposure of the former reduces their number to a trifle less than that of the other sex at maturity. Thus God in Providence confirms the law of his Word.

Marriage is the most sacred, intimate, and binding, of all human relationships. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." St. Paul writes, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself." Such being the nature of this union, it is commonplace to say that personal appearance, social position, wealth, are not sufficient basis for entering upon this holy estate. The man who, being asked whom he married, replied, after hesitating somewhat, "I married—let me see—\$30,000—I forget her other name," is as good a specimen as we can expect to find of those who marry for sordid motives. We cannot delay to mention all the

qualifications for marriage, but it is safe to remark that a hasty marriage is likely to be an unhappy one. An old-fashioned courtship, running as long as the old-fashioned consumption, is not desirable. Yet too much of modern courtship may be justly denominated "sparking by steam." The choice of a husband or wife should be a question demanding our best judgment as well as our best love. Else we may verify the old saying, "Marry in haste; repent at your leisure." Still, other things being equal, comparatively early marriages are to be commended. The tastes, habits of thought and action, will be more easily modified and assimilated in such cases than when one's ways have become stereotyped by age.

This union is to be for life: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." It were easy to show how disobedience to this law of the perpetuity of the marriage bond, fosters and engenders licentiousness, divides and ruins families, and disintegrates human society. On Christian grounds, the tie can be dissolved only by adultery or death. Were we to keep this high standard before us, more caution would be exercised in consummating this union, more forbearance would be exercised by husbands and wives, and children would be saved from the fearful evils flowing from the separation or divorce of their parents. Lax

divorce legislation has produced a terrible fruitage of severed families and social disease. Great is the responsibility of those who frame laws making the dissolution of the marriage compact as easy as that of any commercial copartnership. No Christian should avail himself of unchristian legislation. True, "the hardness of men's hearts" may put in a plea now as well as 3,000 years ago, but we must not forget that it is high time the civilized world passed out from its childhood. It will be a boon to society when the civil contract implied in marriage, shall recognize the Divine origin and the perpetuity of the marriage tie.

Marriage is the foundation of home. What a magic is in the word *Home!* The dictionary cannot define it; brains cannot comprehend it; only with the *heart* can we "read between the lines," and discover its full significance. What memories crowd upon us at the mention of this word. Greatly as surroundings differ, yet our early home has attractions possessed by no other spot on earth. It was there that our entrance into life was hailed with gladness. There with tenderest care the helpless young life was nourished. There, when those diseases and accidents to which children are heirs, called for unremitting attention, loving eyes watched us day and night; sensitive ears heard every breath we drew; instinctive love anticipated our every

want; the voice of prayer ascended to heaven on our behalf. Perhaps death has sealed those eyes and stilled those hearts. Yet the memory is sweet, though sad. Home provides for the sustenance and comfort of many years of early life, "without money and without price." Toil and care are unceasing, that children may be fed, clothed, sheltered and educated. Home is a kingdom where the word of father or mother is law, just when we need a "strong central government." Hot-blooded and inexperienced, how great the need that youth should know the restraints of home. As we review our early days, how grateful we are for the checks and chastisements which have saved us from so much sin and suffering. Small wonder that the "street Arabs" of our large cities become the degraded and dangerous men who defy all law. They are thrust out to care for themselves when they most need care. Home is a miniature world, in which may be cultivated all those graces that make life pleasant. There we learn our first lessons in unselfishness. There we are taught to respect the rights of others. There we learn the amenities of life, and find a practical illustration of the Christian charity which thinks it "more blessed to give than to receive."

I know I have been sketching, to a good extent, an ideal home. Of course the average home is far from perfect. There are sad excep-

tions to the saying, "There is no place like home." But the tendency of true marriage is to create a true home. And home has no real foundation but in the institution of marriage. A bachelor may have a "hall," but has nothing worthy of the name of home. It is a life-union between one man and one woman, which leads them to found a home. It is marriage which renders children an honor instead of a disgrace. It is the commonness of interest in their children, that produces mutual forbearance between husband and wife. It is love for their offspring which incites them to the little kindnesses and the great sacrifices that typify the providence and love of our Heavenly Father. It is worthy of remark that many of the blessings of home are not dependent on the moral character of parents. The Maker of man, who "setteth the solitary in families," has implanted in human hearts an instinctive love for their offspring. Scarcely anything but *rum* can down this parental affection. In the worst portions of New York, where vice is the rule, many a mother sits rocking the cradle of her sick child all night on the sidewalk, that her babe may have the fresh and healing air which is effectually shut out of those tenement houses by crowds of human beings, and floors covered with filth. Few homes are as bad as no home. And there are thousands of homes not attractive to you and me,

which are the best place on earth to the weary bodies and aching hearts of others. "Home, Sweet Home," is played "with variations." Yet around its harmonious strains, in any of its forms, how many precious memories gather. That fittest type of Heaven is possible only as the basis is furnished by marriage. Among the relics of my early home is my father's family Bible. The family record is made in his handwriting, and the date under his name on the fly leaf corresponds with the date of his marriage. Thus the gathering together of those things which make home pleasant in its associations and cultivating by its surroundings, is a natural sequence of marriage.

DISHONESTY: OR, THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20.15.

The distinction between mine and thine arose at an early period of human history. The rights of property are a part of civilization. The recognition of property rights is an incitement to industry; and without industry, our world would soon be a poor-house or a pandemonium. God's law recognizes the right of property. In many places in the Bible, in varied forms, with applications to special cases, the rights of man as to his property are stated, defined, and enforced by threatened penalties. Eighth in order of the Ten Commandments, we find the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal."

This commandment is of course opposed to what is commonly called theft. It is likewise opposed to communism, agrarianism, or any form of involuntary distribution of property, to "nationalization of the land" without consent of all land-owners. God's law guards the rights of property, and hence is favorable to those who have accumulated much or little of worldly store. "That's the commandment for me," says the selfish man of wealth. Yes, but this sword

has two edges. It forbids the rich to steal from the poor as well as the poor to steal from the rich. And the robbery of the poor is made a special subject of animadversion, and employers are forbidden to keep back the wages of their workmen, or to oppress them in their wages. To steal a poor man's muscle and time is to violate this law. How graphically St. James sets forth, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle, the coming judgment of those rich men, of whom he says, "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." This law is, in a word, opposed to the getting of any property, save by gift, without rendering an equivalent.

Let us note a few of the more common forms of this sin. Gambling is one of them. Both the winner and the loser are thieves in intent. Gambling in stocks or grain is no better than seven-up for the whiskey. Lotteries are to be classed with gambling. Strange that a state which has laws against theft and fraud, should legalize a lottery. Lotteries at church fairs, whether in the form of a ring-cake, a grab-bag, or a fish-pond, are as bad as the worst. These "pious frauds" are as unscriptural as they are contemptible. Bribery deserves a place here. The giver and the taker of a bribe are equally dis-

honest. Speculating with trust funds has come to be one of the most common methods of dishonesty. Into this maelstrom hundreds have been drawn, who would have rejected the thought of stealing from the poor, the widow and the fatherless. Society would be helped by an administration of justice which would make "defrauder" synonymous with "robber," which would not encourage thievery on a large scale by treating a man with a "deficiency in his accounts," as anything but a common thief. Misrepresentation in selling or buying, in order to get a "good bargain," is stealing. The man who pays for sugar does not call for part sand. To cheat in weight or measure, is to steal. To sell grain or fruit by an unfair sample, to put the best at the top, and so to get a good price for a poor article, to recommend our goods more than they will bear, are common methods of theft. To jew a man down, when he only asks a fair margin on goods, to take advantage of a seller's necessities, are equally reprehensible with the foregoing. A refusal to pay honest debts is theft, unless such payment is absolutely impossible. Bankruptcy is often but a long and legal name for fraud or theft. Living beyond one's means, unless in case of extreme necessity, is a method of stealing much in vogue in our country. Josh Billings has furnished the motto for this popular sin of this fast age: "A man should

live within his means, if he has to borrow money to do it with."

This commandment requires honesty in our dealings with government and with corporations, as well as with individuals. It is opposed to "crooked" whiskey, to unstamped cigars, to smuggling, to buying or selling goods on which we know the government has been defrauded, to false returns to assessors, to back-pay legislation. The brand of thief is on the man who steals a railroad-ride. If "corporate bodies have no souls," they have pockets, and he is a pickpocket who cheats a corporation. What great need there is that officers of corporations should learn that mathematical axiom, "The whole is the sum of all its parts," so that they would no sooner defraud a thousand citizens than one. "Fat contracts," granted because the money comes from the public treasury (which means from several hundred or thousand private citizens), and because a percentage comes to the grantors; the reckless giving away of government lands; all forms of squandering the money or property of the general government; these are in proof of the need of a conscience and a judgment educated to regard the sanctity of property rights and the Divine origin of the moral law. This commandment is not simply a statement that "honesty is the best policy"; it is God's absolute prohibition of dis-

honesty. Principle, not policy, is to be our guide.

When will the day come when the Golden Rule shall be the standard of moral measurement? When will prohibitions and penalties be unnecessary? When shall we be able to understand the spirit of St. Paul's injunction, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth"? When shall selfishness pass away, and the world be blest with universal good will? When shall perfect love cast out fear, and perfect honesty banish distrust? Not till we obey the words and imitate the example of "The Just One."

It is a common thing to find men who are honest with their fellow-men, but do not give God his due. They "rob God," and will not restore that which they know belongs to him. They ought to "render to God the things which are God's," on the same principle on which they "render to all their dues." Honest men, be consistent by becoming Christians.

That genial and witty author, Dr. O. W. Holmes, touched on this matter of dishonesty, and showed how much needs to be done before the world reaches a perfect moral state, in the first number of his famous papers, entitled, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table." The lines I copy are from the Atlantic Monthly for November, 1857, and to some may need this word of explanation: Wm. Miller, who taught

that Christ would make his second advent in the year 1843, created much excitement, and Dr. Cumming, of England, was prophesying the speedy dissolution of the present order of things, at the time Dr. Holmes wrote. Dr. Holmes assumes, in common with the general interpretation of Scripture, that righteousness is to triumph before the dissolution of the world. The title of his poem is,

“LATTER DAY WARNINGS.”

When legislators keep the law,
When banks dispense with bolts and locks;
When berries—whortle, rasp and straw—
Grow bigger downwards through the box;

When he that selleth house or land,
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right;
When haberdashers choose the stand
Whose window hath the broadest light;

When preachers tell us all they think,
And party-leaders all they mean;
When what we pay for, that we drink,
From real grape or coffee-bean;

When lawyers take what they would give,
And doctors give what they would take;
When city fathers eat to live,
Save when they fast for conscience' sake;

When one that hath a horse to sell,
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron to the hoof;

When in the usual place for rips,
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips,
Where first umbrellas need repair;

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbor not
Such dimples as would hold your fist;

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before;
When first the locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac Tunnel's bore;

Till then, let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe.”

LYING: OR, THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:16.

The Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," forbids perjury, slander, libel, flattery, tale-bearing, and all kinds of lying. To some of the common methods of lying let us direct our attention. Custom is often stranger than law. A habit of sinning sometimes wears out the patience of conscience, and that inward monitor gives us the rein and lets us go where we will and as we will, only saying this parting word: "You must take your own chances." The common liar, as we call him, is a most despicable character; he lies concerning everything, lies without a motive, lies when the truth would serve him better. Of such general liars, this passing notice is sufficient. To particular lies, to partial lies, to lies covered by custom, to lies hidden by piles of greenbacks, and to several other varieties of lies, let us now give our thought.

Parental lies may well be named first, as it is at home where lessons of deceit are most easily learned. Parents make promises to their children which they hope the children will forget,

which they do not intend to keep, which they do not fulfill even when reminded of them, which their children soon learn to estimate at their proper value. Parents sometimes make threats against their children which they do not execute, and do not intend to execute. They seek to enforce their weak government by scaring their children with lies as to "the black man," and many similar appeals to childish fear. A lie told to one's own child is as black as the blackest. Children often lie to escape punishment; indeed are sometimes frightened into lying by inconsiderate threats, or a disproportionate whipping; often promise, "I'll never do so again," and break their word the next day. Children bidden to do a certain work, sometimes report it as done, when it is hardly half-done. It becomes parents to watch the first development of untruthfulness in their children, and by example and precept strive to correct it.

Society lies are common. "Not at home," when you are in the kitchen; "Glad to see you," emphasized with a kiss, when you hate the sight of your caller; "Do call again," when you hope that face may never be seen in your house again. Of course these and similar cases are considered as simple matters of courtesy, but we may be courteous without the aid of deceit.

Business lies, lies for gain, need notice. These are frequently made no account of, as being a

necessary part of a thorough business education, as being essential to success. Deacon Jabe Sniffin, who was a capital horse-trader, who thought he had experienced a change of heart, but did not want to experience a change of business, went to consult with Deacon Aminadab Tweedle, the whiskey-grocer; said Sniffin: "Now, look a here; you don't s'pose, Brother Tweedle, you don't s'pose them little stories, sort o' lies like, that you and I tell in the way of trade will be reckoned up agin us in the day of judgment? Sarcumstanced as we air, we can't help it, you know. I don't s'pose it will make no sort o' difference at all in the sight of the Lord, long's the heart's all right; now does it, Brother Tweedle?"

Lying advertisements are a common resort of some business men. Medicines, machinery, almost all kinds of goods, are represented as vastly better than the facts will warrant. Labels often lie, when they read "Pure Pepper," "Pure Ground Coffee," and the like. Newspaper lies need no description. I do not suppose the proportion of liars is any greater among writers for the press than among many other classes. But their lies are more generally known, as by means of the public prints a man may lie by wholesale. Political lies are a staple article in all regular campaigns. To vilify the opposing party and its candidates, and to glorify one's

own party and its representatives, make up the usual divisions of a political harangue. Statesmen can hardly be distinguished from politicians, when they mingle in the arena during the contest for office. Theological lies must not go unnoticed. The controversialist, whether in the pulpit or through the press, who misrepresents his opponent, even though his opponent be an infidel, is as guilty as a lying politician. Physicians sometimes yield to the temptation to deceive their patients and their patients' friends. I am not unaware of the reasons for keeping the truth from a patient who is in a critical condition, but it would seem that the truth may be withheld without telling a falsehood. Often nothing cures equal to a "placebo," when the mind needs medicine more than the body, but a deep moral sense will draw a line beyond which innocent deception can not go. In our present method of conducting cases of litigation, it is considered a lawyer's professional duty to keep back as much of unwelcome truth as legal technicalities will permit, and to so conduct his case that his client shall win, not that justice may be done. Of course it is supposed that the opposing council will do his best to present the other side, and it may be argued that this is the best method of getting at the truth. But it may perhaps be safely said, without a sweeping condemnation of the legal fraternity, that our mod-

ern civilization demands, and our legal brethren are able to devise, a better method of conducting trials and suits of all kinds.

Equivocation is a way of lying used by people of tender conscience, who tell a half-truth, but can not tell a falsehood; as Abraham said, Sarah was his sister, which was true, but which was calculated to convey the impression that she was not his wife. Hypocrisy is an acted lie, and, whether in the church or out of it, deserves our execration. The willful violation of business engagements, spoken or written, is a breach of this commandment. The breaking of the solemn vows at the marriage-altar, is to be classed with the blackest kind of lying.

There are, as we have seen, many ways of lying, many temptations to lying, many excuses offered for lying. To be perfectly truthful, we need not only to be watchful and conscientious, but we need the help of Him who is "The Truth."

This subject demands a few words on lying to God. Ananias and Sapphira were not the first nor the last of those guilty of this sin. How many of us who call ourselves Christians, have broken the vows by which, in private and in public, we promised to give to the Lord our time, our strength, our all. Often have we "kept back part of the price" of genuine spiritual life, grown worldly, and forgotten that we are not our own. We are not our own, by our

giving ourselves to God, as well as by the fact that we are "bought with a price." The Savior gave us pardon and peace only on the condition of absolute self-surrender. Only as we keep all on the altar can we be true to our covenant with God. Let us be so thoroughly sincere and truthful that the Searcher of hearts may say of each of us, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." But there are many who, in times of danger, trouble, or sickness, have promised God that if he would deliver them, they would serve him. The deliverance came, but the vow has not been kept. Are you one of those who have broken such vows? Say, with David, "I will pay that which I have vowed."

COVETOUSNESS: OR, THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS, 20:17.

The last of the commandments, "Thou shalt not covet," specifies among forbidden objects, our "neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant," some articles of real and personal property, and then closes with, "nor anything that is thy neighbor's." As to its comprehensiveness, this "commandment is exceeding broad."

The Hebrew word here translated, "covet," is, in the repetition of the Decalogue in the fifth of Deuteronomy, translated "desire." We are not forbidden to desire the comforts and blessings of this life, but we are prohibited from wishing or desiring to enrich ourselves or to add to our worldly comforts, at the expense of our neighbor. This commandment, unlike the others, does not relate to conduct; it rather relates to character, which is the basis of conduct. Here, after external duties have been prescribed and open sins prohibited, we find a word aimed at the heart, a law which bears on the inner life, a prohibition of wrong thoughts.

It is evident that obedience to this commandment is very difficult: but the difficulty is only in proportion to the importance. More than all the other laws of the "second table," the text shows that the underlying thought of this portion of the Decalogue is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If we can keep this commandment, we shall have no trouble in keeping the laws as to our external conduct towards our fellow-men. Wrong desire is the seed of wrong-doing. As has been said, this commandment aims to "kill sin in the egg." Certainly that is better than to wait for evil desire to hatch into open wickedness and grow to maturity.

It may perhaps be truly said that the real design of the tenth commandment is to condemn and prohibit selfishness. Fallen man has much in common with the beasts of prey; his appetite must be satisfied, his passions gratified, though others suffer to minister to his comfort. Savages are supremely selfish; the little children of our civilized, Christian homes show the same trait, and need many lessons to teach them the "golden rule," the happiness of giving, the joy of serving others. As usually developed, this selfishness manifests itself in some kind of worldliness; frequently it takes the form of wealth-seeking and money-loving. Whether wealth be sought for its own sake, as in the case of the

miser, or for the pleasure, position and "pride of life" which money usually procures, the aim is selfish, the motive is debasing, and the results on character are deplorable. I speak of the pursuit of wealth as the business of life, not of the legitimate acquisition of wealth by those who have lofty motives, and who never forget the claims of God and of their fellow-men. It is not the possession of wealth that shows the character of a man: the question is, does the wealth possess the man? Is he a slave to it and a worshiper of it? Nay, this selfish worldliness is shown by the love of money, the desire for money, the devotion of one's life to money-getting, though the wealth-seeker always remain poor. Worldliness, or covetousness, is not a sin of the rich alone; it is especially a sin of those who "will to be rich," whether the purpose is accomplished or not. There are some unwordly rich men, and there are many wordly, wealth-seeking poor men.

The indulgence of the desires forbidden in the text, is opposed to spirituality and piety. It is a violation of God's law, hence it is impious as well as immoral. It is the seeking of a seeming good that God has stamped as evil. It is setting up our judgment against that of our all-wise Father. It is the displacement of spirituality by earthliness, of the eternal by the temporal, of God by the world. "If any man love

the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (1 John, 2:15,16.)

The indulgence of these forbidden desires, and the resulting worldliness, are of an insidious, self-justifying nature. Saint Francis de Sales, to whom multitudes resorted as a confessor, said, "None confess the sin of covetousness." The sin is so common as to be reputable. "The multitude never blush." A parsimonious man calls himself frugal; an avaricious man thinks himself simply prudent; a devotee of wealth says he is only seeking to provide for his children. Mark the manner in which Eve reasoned herself into partaking of the forbidden fruit: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Thus ever does the lying Serpent try to make "the worse appear the better reason," and to show the reasonableness of disobeying the Divine law. Let us listen to the strong language of our Lord: "Ye can not serve God and Mammon." It was wisely said by one of the church Fathers, that the Savior does not say we can not *have* God and Mammon, but we can not

“serve” God and Mammon: “For he that is the servant of God, must be master of his wealth.” But the man who serves his wealth and worships the world, can not be a servant of God. If our “treasure” is on earth, our heart will be there; if our “treasure” is in heaven, our hearts will be in heaven. So taught our Master.

Covetousness is a sin of the heart, but it leads to many open violations of the laws of God. Ahab desired Naboth’s vineyard, and offered to buy it or trade for it; but Naboth was unwilling to sell the vineyard, for it was, he said, “the inheritance of my fathers.” Yet Ahab so coveted that vineyard that he was “heavy and displeased” at Naboth’s refusal, “and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.” This sinful desire, made known to Jezebel, led to perjury and murder in order to the theft of the coveted property. Three other commandments were broken because the tenth was not observed. The evil results of this grasping after the world are thus stated in 1 Timothy, 6:9: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

Covetousness is a foe to human happiness. True happiness depends on what we *are*, not on what we *have*. The real question is not what a man’s *property* is worth, but what the *man* is

worth. Acquiring or possessing worldly goods for their own sake, or for any selfish end, is sure to be disappointing as to the resulting happiness or satisfaction. Solomon says, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." Plutarch, referring to the same subject, says, "Your medicine makes your disease worse." A Latin proverb teaches, "Money provokes avarice, instead of satisfying it." One might as well drink salt water to quench his thirst as expect to satisfy his desires by worldly wealth. How much is enough? A millionaire replied, "A little more." Thus

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

Well would it be if we would heed those words written by Paul to Timothy, "The love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

This commandment teaches contentment with our lot; not contentment with a lot which diligence and honest toil can improve, but absence of envy at the worldly prosperity of our neighbors, and absence of all "covetous desires" for wealth. But true contentment is, as one has said, "a bird of paradise"; it comes from another world. He who has a title to heaven is rich, and may well be content with what Providence gives him of this world. With promises

of God's presence and help, one can afford to forego the "uncertain riches" of earth. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'" Of Christians it is said, "All things are yours." It is even true that God is ours, and possessing him, and all things in him, we are rich for time and for eternity. Let none of us imitate the man who "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

MENTAL CULTURE A CHRISTIAN DUTY.

“ In understanding, be men.”—I CORINTHIANS, 14:20.

Man is not so much a unit as a union. He is not an element, but a compound. For practical purposes, we can hardly do better than consider human nature as composed of three elements, spiritual, intellectual and corporeal. Each of these elements is a germ to be developed by culture. Man begins his existence with capacities rather than powers. Almost every child is born with great possibilities; but the conversion of the possible into the actual, is the work of culture. Physically, many a man has had as good a capacity as any of the noted athletes of ancient or modern times, but the neglect of culture has made him a weakling. Intellectual capacity as vast as Aristotle's, Bacon's, or Newton's, has, no doubt, often fallen to the lot of men whom the world has not recognized. This practical world, as it gets no benefit from uncultured capacity, gives no recognition to a man for what he might have been. Spiritual natures as deep, and as susceptible of converse with heaven, as David's, Fenelon's, or Fletcher's, have been cultured so little that a long life has only brought them to a half-opened bud.

But not only does each part of man's three-fold nature need culture, but the happiness, the usefulness, the perfection of the *man*, require the harmonious development of all the parts. One-sided culture has produced many monstrosities. The crowds who gather to witness the exhibitions of human strength and endurance, are attracted by a monstrosity. Had the time, thought and patience, which have been given to physical training, been bestowed on the whole being, instead of athletes, there would have been *men*. Intellectual culture, divorced from physical and spiritual development, is equally as defective, though not so gross. A cultivated mind in a weak body, with a dormant spiritual nature, is a sad spectacle, a bound Prometheus. But the world has specimens of unnatural spiritual development. Though the spiritual element is the highest in man's nature, it may have an excessive, because abnormal, growth. Such is the case when the body is neglected or abused for the soul's sake; as though that which God has so "fearfully and wonderfully made," could be despised without irreverence, or injured without loss. Again, the culture of the spiritual, to the exclusion of the intellectual, nature, only produces a prodigy. That is a blind devotion, of which ignorance is the mother. A spirituality which pays homage to a Power it does not strive to apprehend, to a Wisdom whose work-

ings it does not study, to a Love whose methods do not stimulate and enlarge the intellect, can not command the respect of men or the full approbation of God.

There exists a somewhat widespread belief that mental culture is a foe to Christian faith, if not to Christian practice. This belief is common among men of culture who are destitute of Christian faith. Men who consecrate their lives to the development of their minds, to the gathering of stores of literary or scientific information, often become devotees of mental culture, which fills the whole field of their vision, and receives as real a worship as any Christian offers to God. Such men are too much absorbed in their acts of devotion, to discover or appreciate the grandeur of Christianity. With a partial knowledge of the Christian scheme, with methods of thought which are unfavorable to Christianity, with an exalted idea of intellect, these men despise the simplicity of the Gospel, or doubt its mysteries. Or, considering mental culture and religion as alternatives, they choose the former, when they might be blessed with both. Eve essayed to gain wisdom by disobedience to the "Higher Law." The Serpent would persuade her that God had prohibited knowledge, when he had only forbidden sin. The God of the Bible does not want us to remain in ignorance, but to abide in holiness. There is no deg-

radation of the intellect in submission to God.

There is another class who consider mental culture as opposed to Christian faith. There are Christians of a thoroughly devotional spirit, who are so given up to strictly religious duties, as to think that time taken for mental culture, is stolen from God. There are others who judge from the antagonism sometimes seen between men of culture and men of faith, that there is something antagonistic between culture and faith; or, they have known a humble, devout young man to lose his piety in gaining his education. Firmly persuaded that religion is of the first importance, fearing that mental culture will uproot his cherished faith and ruin his soul, a man may shun learning as he would flee from a pestilence. This fear of danger to his piety may arise from a doubt, of which he is hardly conscious, whether his experience and his Bible will bear the light of investigation. But if they will not, would it not be well to know the worst? However, a slight acquaintance with Christian biography is sufficient to prove that cultured intellects are often conjoined with believing hearts. Again, it may be urged that pride and self-sufficiency are the natural, usual effects of intellectual development; that, in all cases, "knowledge puffeth up." But true knowledge, knowledge gained under Christian influences and for Christian purposes, is not that of

which Paul speaks: he would have us "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil"; he advises us to pray and sing "with the understanding," as well as "with the spirit," and gives us his counsel in those Christ-like words, "In malice, be ye children; but in understanding, be men."

Our theme boldly challenges the view that culture and faith are antagonistic. Indeed, it invites us to go farther into this subject than to disprove that antagonism. We must do more than to show that mental culture is harmless and permissible; we must exhibit it as a "Christian Duty." But while we take this bold position, we are not called to glorify intellectual development. Let the votaries of the world speak the praises of the world; let the worshipers of culture bow at culture's shrine; but let Christians study how, by the discipline of their minds, they may intelligently worship and efficiently serve their Divine Redeemer. No selfish motives must be stirred by our consideration of this subject. We may not look on mental culture as a means for our gratification. It will not do to be actuated in the pursuit of it simply by a desire to "understand all mysteries and all knowledge." It is no motive worthy of a Christian, to get an education for the purpose of worldly gain. We dare not appeal to ambition, and say with the Babel-builders, "Let us make

us a name." We may not seek the glory of earthly distinction, the honor accorded by men, the immortality of Fame; but we must seek that "glory and honor and immortality" which God crowns with "eternal life." Keeping these limitations in mind, let us enter more fully into our subject.

The fact that man has intellectual capacity, makes it his duty to develop it. We do not fully reverence God as Creator, unless we make the most of the being he has given us. If it is a duty to care for our bodies, to make and keep them strong and pure, to treat them as "temples of the Holy Ghost," that so we may "glorify God in" our "body"; then it is certainly our duty to develop our mental faculties. If it is wrong to leave the religious nature blindly groping and vainly calling for God, when the means of finding him are so evident; if it is a sin to stifle the voice of conscience, and, by prayerlessness and godlessness, to dwarf the spiritual capacity; surely it is a sin not to improve the faculties of our minds. If lack of mental cultivation did not affect the health of our bodies and impede the growth of our souls, it would still be wrong to slight the gift of our Creator by neglecting one of the three constituent parts of our being. If this talent be buried, what shall we say when the Universal Proprietor asks for his own with interest?

But the Creator's work without us, as well as his work within us, tells of the Christian's duty to improve his mind. The world on which we live is everywhere marked by the "footprints of the Creator." Well may we join the devout Psalmist in saying, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches; so is this great and wide sea." Innumerable fields of thought and investigation open before the mind, in this wonderful world. Matter in all its protean changes, life with all its varieties, laws the most marvelous, designs the most beneficent, speak the Creator's praise. Universal nature seems to be living in obedience to Paul's counsel: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." But he who examines not these every-day marvels, slights that on which infinite skill, power and love have been bestowed. How are the great problems in Nature's school to be solved, except by "always thinking upon them"? How shall we hear the stars

"Forever singing as they shine,
'The hand that made us is Divine,'"

if we do not, with cultured ear, listen to their song? Truly if

"The undevout astronomer is mad,"

the devout man who neglects the wonderful works of God, is hardly sane. And this unde-

voutness of some students of nature, makes more evident the duty of studying the Creator's works, that we may prove the madness of the undevout. But to discover the indications, the unmistakable proofs, of God's presence and power in creation, to follow the paths of former explorers, to make a path across trackless fields, both require and give mental culture.

But the Christian is more than a Theist; and the claims of God as Creator, are but a part of his claims. We owe it to him as our Redeemer, to cultivate our minds. Redemption is the grandest of facts. The Divine origin of the plan of Redemption comes out more and more boldly, as we give ourselves to the study of it. "The angels desire to look into" these depths of infinite love and wisdom. It is true that a cultured intellect, without a keen moral sense and a fine spiritual discernment, can do little towards honoring and glorifying God "in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." But we are not dealing with cold intellectualism, but with mental culture for Christians. We hesitate not in saying that the question involved in the subject of God's method of saving sinners, can not be even approximately grasped by an uncultivated mind. The Atonement is not a doctrine easily understood, as may be learned from the history of that doctrine. Of course cultured men do not quite agree in their

views of this central doctrine. Yet it is safe to say that a devout Christian is made more devout if, by the strong effort of his keen intellect, he strives to sound the fathomless sea of God's love, and to climb the unscalable heights of the wisdom that rescued a fallen world. Then, we owe it to our Redeemer to develop our minds, that we may render him the best service of which we are capable. Nothing is too good. Christ has redeemed the entire man. It is fitting that we should highly esteem and rightly use what he has redeemed at infinite cost. Our best thoughts, as well as our best deeds and prayers, should be given to his work. All the power of human thought, every grace of rhetoric, every charm of oratory, all these can never adequately tell the glory of his Name and the grandeur of his Gospel.

"Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love and power,
That angels ever knew,
Or mortals ever bore;
All are too mean to speak his worth,
Too mean to set my Savior forth."

Then, there are many kinds of work for the Savior, for which mental culture is essential. Among these may be noted this, that, as a rule, men of culture can be reached and led to Christ, only by Christians of cultivated minds. There must be sympathy, something of affinity, to enable one soul to bring another soul to Jesus. Sometimes this bond of sympathy is formed by

a family relationship, as when Andrew brought Peter to the Master; sometimes it is a common lot of sorrow; again it is a commonness of industrial or social interests. This law manifests itself in the sympathy of cultured minds: there are so many topics with which all such are familiar, so many names which awaken common feelings, so many matters in which their tastes agree, that soul is bound to soul. This bond of sympathy often becomes the medium by which the Divine Spirit sends his message of love to the heart of the unsaved man of culture. It would oftener be the medium of Divine influence, were our culture thoroughly consecrated to Christ. It will not answer for us to say that it is much more difficult to win a cultured than an uncultured man; for, however difficult the work, all belong to our Lord, and we must claim them for him. Besides, the cultured convert is worth more to the cause of Christ than the other. We name Saul of Tarsus as a sufficient illustration. The influence of the conversion of a man of cultivated intellect is usually great, as is frequently shown in the history of foreign missions. All talents are made serviceable to the kingdom of God; and conversion and honest consecration secure the fashioning of culture into the silver and gold vessels of the sanctuary. We have just alluded to the missionary work of the church. For this, mental culture is a necessity.

The mastery of a foreign language, the presentation of the Divine Message in a suitable manner, the parrying of objections made by cultured heathen, not to mention the translation of the Scriptures and similar difficult tasks, make it necessary that we send only men and women of cultivated minds to evangelize the heathen. The great preparation for the conversion of the world is thus dependent on mental culture, which is the "voice in the wilderness" fulfilling the command, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Yet again, biblical criticism, Scripture interpretation, systematic divinity, and kindred branches of study, demand the highest mental culture, and greatly promote the Redeemer's kingdom. The Bible, which is "the religion of Protestants," is intelligible to the masses, because learned men have translated and expounded it. For clear statement of Christian doctrine, we are indebted to men of culture. Those defenses of the Faith, which make us so confident that the citadel of Christian truth is impregnable, are the product of consecrated brains. The Christian literature which is a glory to the church and a light to the world, sprang forth in its beauty and strength from the heads of intellectual Christians. A momentary glance at the history of the church will reveal the important place occupied by mental

culture. Abstract the intellectual culture of the apostle Paul from the early history of Christianity, and from the New Testament record, and how great the void. What would the Reformation have been without mental culture? Would there have been a Reformation without it? Deduct the learning of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and their precursors and coadjutors, from the forces which God employed to free his Word and purify his Church, and how changed would be the causes and the results. What has given Wesley's influence such might and permanence, but that mental vigor by which he systematized his views and organized his followers? The possibility of doing a great work for Christ, the opportunity for setting in motion a train of influences which will reach the remotest future with their blessings, the gaining of a leverage by which the world may be lifted heavenward, depend frequently on mental culture. The highest kind of Christian service will ever be rendered, the strong foundations for the upbuilding of Christianity will usually be laid, by men of cultured minds. Every Christian is bound to do the best work for which he can be fitted. "There is plenty of room in the upper story"; and a holy ambition to be useful may be gratified by the cultivation of our mental powers. Thus may we enlarge the sphere of our activity, and multiply the power of our influence.

We are called to mental culture by Divine Providence. Providence has been defined as "God in motion." We ought to believe as heartily in Providence as in Creation and Redemption. This world's interests are not left to chance. Its intellectual and spiritual development can no more be secured without God, than could that physical development whose method reveals the Divine Artificer. The devout student of the world's history will find unquestionable proofs of a Superintending Mind. Ruling and overruling, God orders the affairs of this world. Is it without significance that the present intellectual status of the world, and its opportunities for culture, have been brought about by Christianity? Was not the Reformation of the sixteenth century a cause, as well as an effect, of the revival of learning? The Divine method, it would seem, has been to stimulate mental culture by spiritual development. With hardly an exception, our colleges have been founded by Christian men. This not only shows that these men believed in mental culture, but so widespread a conviction, so general a movement, can only be considered an indication of Providence. We have come into this world when everything indicates a demand for mental culture. It is a sad anachronism for an ignorant Christian to live in an enlightened age. The minute-hand of God's chronometer points to mental culture.

The need of the hour is sanctified brains. He who would "serve his generation" must "catch the tune of the times," and keep step to the "Grand March" of Providence. The good name of our religion demands culture in an age of culture. John Foster wrote a long essay on "The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion." No small part of that aversion, in our day, as in his, is the result of those representations and professions which come from devout, but uncultured, Christians. How many caricatures of Christianity have been drawn by men who meant to bring out the loveliness and power of that religion which was to them a constant inspiration. This is not said as an apology for skepticism, but as a plea for culture. The duty of Christians is to remove every stumbling-block from every soul, so far as in them lies. It would be easy to point out the inconsistencies of cultured skeptics, to show how inexcusable they are, to tell them to go to the New Testament to learn what Christianity is; but our aim is to discover our duty, not to prove their responsibility. As long as spiritual men despise or neglect mental culture, so long will men of culture have an aversion to spirituality. It is the duty of each of these classes to improve what they have, and get what they lack. And the Christian has, as we have found, many reasons for improving his mind, besides

the help he may give to cultured skeptics. Yet such need special help, as the rank growth of the intellect often shades the spiritual nature, and robs it of its nourishment. For it is too true that culture does not always predispose men to piety; it is sometimes the rival of Christ. Paul found the Athenians engrossed with culture. They were so accustomed to doubts and questionings, that as soon as they heard of Christ's resurrection, "some mocked," and others gracefully brought his speech to a close by the remark, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Yet some "clave unto him and believed," among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite. There was some fruit, though not much fruit. Cultured Dionysius was won by cultured Paul. Soon after, "Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth," where he met with greater success. Admit, then, that culture does not lead to faith. What results? Shall we eschew culture? Shall the vast fields of literature and science be abandoned by the Christian Church? Or, shall we claim everything for Christ, these broad and fertile domains included? Most assuredly, we must claim culture for Christ, and we shall be able to remove the impediment in its religious speech, so that it will "speak plain" in its testimony to his power and grace. Let those whose hearts are already his, consecrate to him their brains,

with all their increase. Into these domains, where so much can be made to yield tribute to our King, we should go, "conquering and to conquer." Science has only begun to discover the wonderful works of God. Let us search for new laws, more worlds, clearer proofs of his "Eternal Power and Godhead." Let us appreciate the work to which Newton and Kepler as religiously gave themselves as we give ourselves to prayer. And let us, like these great men, lay all the fruits of our search and our meditation, on the Christian altar. Literature, with all its charms, as well as science, with all its revelations, must be made the unquestionable ally of Christianity. Providence has thrown us into the midst of all forms of culture. Faithfulness to duty requires that we improve our providential opportunities to gain mental culture, and to teach mute science and many-tongued literature to speak "the language of Canaan." This can only be done by a steady advance all along the line. Let the conviction that mental culture is a Christian duty settle down upon the Church, and this vast territory, occupied by the advance guards of both secularism and "other-worldliness," this great border-land between Christianity and infidelity, will, within a generation, acknowledge its rightful Sovereign. Special emphasis belongs to this branch of our subject, from the fact that infidelity is boasting of its

culture, endeavoring to array all intellectual forces against the Gospel, and claiming that the growth of culture is the decay of faith. There is sufficient truth in these claims, and enough earnestness in these endeavors, to convince us that a real conflict is before us. Men of great literary and scientific attainments, men among the nobility of the intellectual realm, men in high social and civil positions, men of irreproachable moral character, are numbered among the apostles of infidelity. Atheists scan God's heavens through the world's largest telescopes; materialists tell us they hunt in vain, with microscope and scalpel, to find a soul; philosophers report that in all their reasonings, they discover no First Cause; judges declare that law has no Divine sanction; statesmen hear the "voice of the people," but no "voice of God;" preachers of the "Religion of Humanity" revile the Gospel of Christ; historians write to prove that the intellectual development of the world will destroy the religion of the Bible, and that in the irrepressible "Conflict between Religion and Science," the latter is always victorious. The German Rationalists, who devoted themselves to the destructive criticism, which, were it accepted, would emasculate the Bible and paralyze faith, were intellectual giants. Strauss was a man of great learning, and all his ability was used in an effort to subvert the supernatural in Christian-

ity. Renan, author of the rose-colored but thoroughly infidel "Life of Jesus," has received an acknowledgment of his erudition, by being elected to membership in the French Academy. Matthew Arnold, one of the *elite* of English literary circles, while disclaiming the title of "infidel," considers orthodox theology "an immense misunderstanding of the Bible, due to the junction of a talent for abstruse reasoning with much literary inexperience." It is true that there is no agreement among the infidel schools of culture, as to the method by which Christianity is to be "explained away." We know that Strauss's "Mythical Theory" was intended to displace the "Rationalistic" method of interpretation; that in Renan "Legend" takes the place of "Myth;" that Arnold, who has much of the spirit and method of Renan, finds a far different character in Jesus from that presented by the learned Frenchman, and holds that criticism produces almost opposite results to those reached by Renan, in its application to the Gospel by St. John. Yet these, and all other opponents of vital Christianity, agree that Orthodoxy is doomed. And they come into the very citadel of the Christian Religion to give us battle. They attempt to train the guns by which Christianity has been defended, upon its defenders. They take their stand on the Bible, and claim that they grasp, and we miss, its mean-

ing. They are versed in the original languages of the Word, and are as familiar with Scripture as a professional exegete. We are glad to know that the great majority of those deserving the name of biblical critics, are Evangelical Christians; that multitudes of men may be found in the Church of God, who are the peers, if not the superiors, of any of the cultured unbelievers. We have been pointing out a danger, calling attention to the strength and the tactics of the foe, not sounding a retreat, or prophesying disaster. There is no cause for alarm, if the Church will do her duty. The Ark of God needs not to be stayed by human hands, but we want it with us, not with the Philistines. These Goliaths who defy Israel, must be slain with their own weapons. Unbelief must be proved to be unscientific. Lord Bacon's remark that "depth in philosophy bringeth back men's minds to religion," must be shown to rest on a sure foundation. There must be an intellectually-drilled Christian army, not an "awkward squad" led by a thorough tactician. There must be "thinking bayonets" as well as great generals. The reign of authority is passing away. It becomes every Christian to be able "to give an answer to every man that asketh" him, "a reason of the hope that is in" him, and to show that he renders to God a "reasonable service." Infidelity is taking on something of system. The men

who eliminate everything supernatural and saving from the Gospel, can make your religious experience appear like a dissolving view. Experimental, as well as doctrinal, Christianity, must search for its foundations, and show the unbelieving world how a supernatural religion is demonstrated by a supernatural experience. Is there any method by which the Christian Church can gain so certain and easy a victory, as by a general movement for mental culture? Thus may she remove reproach, and shine forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Let the Church show that she is more zealous for mental culture than is infidelity, that she uses culture more fairly, that culture, rightly used, promotes faith, let the world see that

"A Christian is the highest style of man,"—

in a word, let mental culture be sought and promoted as a Christian duty, and used in a Christian spirit, and the words of Isaiah will find a glorious fulfillment: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

Some one may say, "There are plenty of learned men in the Church; I have no call to mental culture." It may be you are not called

to devote your life to intellectual pursuits. Yet you are called to improve your mind so far as the opportunity is afforded. From this, there is no exception. To cover this general ground, let us briefly consider an argument founded on Christian experience. The quickening of the mental faculties at conversion, proves that mental culture is a Christian duty. Every Christian who is at all observant, and whose memory will reproduce his experience at the beginning of the new life, can testify to the mental quickening which accompanied the renewal of his heart. How could it be otherwise? His intellect had been involved in his moral history: his memory had retained the record of his sins, though he had tried to forget them; his reason had refused to submit to God; his imagination had often lured him into sin. The conviction which preceded his conversion, forced him to mental activity: it gave him new subjects of thought, and new reasons for thought; it led him to review his way, consider his condition, study his Bible, pray to his God. And when the great change came, it was felt through his whole being. He was conscious that his intellect had been stimulated; that his mind had been illuminated even before the new creation was complete. "God said 'Let there be light,' and there was light," before the "new man" had life breathed into him by the "Quickening Spirit." And in the

new relations, new duties and new hopes, which come to every renewed man, how much there is to employ and enlarge his mind. Thus, every converted man is started or helped on the road to mental culture; and if he fails to follow this leading, he is unfaithful to the renewing Spirit.

Let us look at our subject from one more standpoint. There is no question that it is our duty to cultivate piety; but the character of our piety depends largely on the degree of our intellectual development. The character of one's piety is largely determined by his views of God. It is true no man can comprehend the Infinite, yet it is equally as true that there are almost infinite variations in men's views of God. These views are greatly modified by the degree of men's culture, and by the efforts of their minds to gain clear and worthy views of the Almighty. A man of feeble mind, who believes in the "one true and living God," may have a lower conception of Jehovah than cultured heathen had of Jove, "Father of gods and men." How different our ideas of God from those we entertained in our childhood. What a difference between the apprehension of Divine Power by a man who considers the earth as the center of the universal system, and the thoughts of that Power which fill the mind of a devout astronomer who knows this world is only a speck in an illimitable creation. How much men's appreciation of

the Divine Wisdom varies, according to their ability to grasp the plan and understand the laws of the physical, intellectual and moral world. In a certain sense, it may be said the ignorant and the learned Christian do not worship the same God. Reverence is the very soul of worship: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But the depth of man's reverence corresponds to the height of his knowledge. Praise is an act of worship; and he who knows the most concerning God, will render him the most intelligent and hearty ascriptions of praise. If it be said that all this is readily admitted, but we are to get our views of God from the Bible, we reply that the Bible often invites us to a study of God's works. Having said this, we may further develop our argument, by noting that piety largely rests on a right understanding of the Scriptures, and mental culture is essential to a just interpretation of the Word. This point is well-nigh self-evident: we offer, therefore, illustrations rather than arguments, to call attention to the defectiveness of the piety of those who have not something approaching just views of the interpretation of Scripture. Into what superstitions have such been led by designing men. In what great crimes have they had the approval of an unenlightened conscience. What misconceptions of duty have they exhibited. How strangely have they distorted Christ-

ian doctrine. What gross ideas of heaven have they entertained. Look at the Churches in which the Bible is not the book of the people, but the book of the priests; in which private judgment is forbidden, and the "doctrines and commandments of men" are substituted for the Word of God. Think of the peculiar "experiences" and the inconsistent lives of many professing Christians among our freedmen, for whom the Bible has been a sealed book. Just in proportion to the clearness of their understanding of the great Text-Book, will be the progress of devout souls in the school of Christ. And the two essential requisites for grasping the meaning of the Scriptures, are spiritual-mindedness and mental culture. Once more, persistence in one's devotion to God, the abiding character of one's piety, not unfrequently depends on mental culture. A man of cultured mind usually "counts the cost" before he undertakes to build a Christian character. He is almost certain to get a good start in the way. Or, if culture follows conversion, it deepens the work previously wrought, strengthens the motives for perseverance, and helps one hold himself steadily to the duties of the Christian life. He is unmoved by temptations which drive the uncultured back to the ways of sin. He does not doubt his own experience, and give up his faith in the Bible, because some prominent Christian has apostatized.

By the use of his reason, he extracts the stings from a thousand ills which harass and tempt the Christian of undeveloped mind. He is largely saved from "wandering thoughts" by his mental discipline. He detects the sophistry of infidels and the "wiles of the Devil." All observation will confirm the statement that a much smaller proportion of cultured, than of uncultured, Christians, forsake the ways of God. Thus mental culture often decides whether a man wins or loses heaven.

It is not the purpose of this essay to plead for any special means of mental culture, but to call attention to the desirableness of the result. In fact, the means are so evident, and so easy of access, as to render such work almost unnecessary: schools of all grades abound; books and periodicals bring the means of culture to our firesides; lectures on important topics are given by educated men; the science and the literature of the world are popularized and simplified; a thousand lights are thrown on the Scriptures by the labors of devout scholars. Of course the young Christian, who is not providentially hindered, ought to consecrate many years to mental culture, in those schools and colleges which afford one proof that God calls us to cultivate our minds. The "signs of the times" indicate that the "rising generation" of Christians ought to prepare themselves for valiant service

in the arena of intellectual strife, into which the interests of the Church are so largely thrown. Let the ministers of Christ preach a "holy crusade" against ignorance: a more worthy object than the rescue of "the Holy Sepulcher" may stir their souls. There are battles against sin and sophistry, wherein only the "polished shafts" of disciplined minds will find their way to "the hearts of the King's enemies." And "never too late to learn"; "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties" is the only possible method to those whose years or circumstances prevent their drinking from those fountains supplied by the beneficent patrons of Christian education. Many examples of great culture, where the usual means were not accessible, stimulate such to earnest endeavor. Let "spare time" be spent in gaining mental discipline, or in acquiring useful knowledge. Let our mental faculties, so often a neglected portion of God's heritage, be cultured with patient toil for our Master's sake. Let us observe the whole of "the first and great commandment": "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy MIND."

ENOCH: OR, WALKING WITH GOD.

“Enoch walked with God.”—GENESIS, 5:24.

A few verses in the fifth chapter of Genesis suffice to give the record of a remarkable life, which ended not in death, but in translation. This record is as suggestive as it is brief. It occurs in the midst of a genealogical list where the words, “and he died,” close the biographies of all others. In the few words of the text and the context, as by a few strokes of an artist, a character is drawn, a life is exhibited. Neither the length of a biography, nor the eloquence of a eulogy, nor the statements on tombstones, can be accepted as proof of the purity of a man's life, the nobleness of his aims, the extent of his usefulness, or his value by God's standard. Many men whose closed lives simply called for a passing notice, over whose graves ought to be written, “He was born, and he died,”—little difference whether the dates, or even the names, were given—have had their last resting-places marked by costly slabs or towering monuments inscribed with words unmeaning or untrue. Over the philanthropic John Howard's grave in a foreign land, are these words, “He lived for

others." That brief characterization of his life is weighty enough for a dozen discourses on benevolence and prison-reform. So the character-sketch in our text is full of suggestiveness.

The text sets before us Enoch's fellowship with God. The peculiar expression, "walked with God," occurs only here and in the next chapter, where we read, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." A phrase of so peculiar construction, and applied only to Enoch and to the man whose faith and righteousness led to his selection as the new father of the human race, is worth our study. Dr. Jamieson says it is "a common phrase in eastern countries, denoting constant and familiar intercourse." This seems a more natural meaning than that given by another eminent commentator, who thinks the phrase is to be understood of a "prophetic life spent in immediate converse with the spiritual world." In the Epistle of Jude we are told that Enoch prophesied; but his spirituality, his saintliness, his friendship with God, fitted him to be a prophet in the midst of the ungodly. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" said the Lord when he was about to overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah. Not that Abraham was a prophet, but that he was "the friend of God." Our first parents, made in the Creator's "image" and "likeness," were, perhaps, accustomed to

hearing "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," and only shrunk from the hitherto blessed visitation because they had sinned. After reading of man's expulsion from Eden, of the wickedness of the first son of the first pair, how cheering to find a man born more than three hundred years before Adam died, of whom it is said, he "walked with God." Enoch appears to have lived, surroundings of course excepted, much as Adam would have lived if he had not sinned; not with the same ease, nor by the same means. Perchance as he shows us the better way of living, by his walking with God, his translation may show us a better way of leaving the world than by dying.

This fellowship with God is for all who seek it. The apostle John declares, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ." The familiar benediction with which Paul closes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, prays that "the communion of the Holy Ghost" may be with those brethren. But the word "communion" is a translation of the Greek word often translated, as in John, "fellowship." How sacredly intimate is this "fellowship of the Spirit," as Paul calls it in Philippians. How near that Spirit comes to a believing soul. How personal and tender his relation to us and interest in us, when we are urged to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." This fel-

lowship with God is constant communion with God. He who enjoys it fulfills the command, "Pray without ceasing." He has seasons of prayer, but he has also uninterrupted converse with the Savior. He has more than faith; he has *trust*: he *rests in God*. Bengel, the well-known commentator, was said to be mighty in prayer. A gentleman secreted himself one evening where he could look into Bengel's window, and waited to hear that devoted man plead with God. Weary, and nearly overcome with sleep, Bengel at last gave up his work, folded his tired hands over his open Bible, closed his eyes, and this was his prayer: "Lord Jesus, thou knowest me; we are on the same old terms. Amen." For many of us, such language would, even under such circumstances, be irreverent; but in a man like Bengel, these words are a revelation of the inner life. What is said of Moses may become true of any thoroughly devout Christian: "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exodus, 33:11.)

This fellowship brings great privileges and blessings in special manifestations—if we may not say *revelations*—of God to the soul. The saintly Enoch became God's mouthpiece to the sinners of that day. Our Lord said, as recorded in the fourteenth of John, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him

and will manifest myself to him." In the next chapter are these words, "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." Yet even among the apostles, to whom these words were spoken, there was an inner circle of three who alone were with Jesus at the raising of the dead maiden, on the mount of transfiguration, and in the struggle in Gethsemane. Of these three, Peter, James and John, the last was specially "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who was nearest him at the last supper, and who, after the Savior's resurrection, at once discerned the Master when the net was filled with fish, and exclaimed, "It is the Lord!" The being numbered among God's inner circle of friends, and enjoying the special privilege of entering into the inner sanctuary, is not a result of Divine caprice or arbitrary choice, but of Christian consecration, of Christlikeness. Spiritual sight and spiritual insight are dependent on spirituality. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant."

We are apt to think our surroundings unfavorable to this walking with God; to excuse ourselves from a high grade of piety by pleading our lack of privileges and our superabundance of toils and trials. We are "cumbered with much serving," worn out with family cares, and have no time to cultivate our spiritual life. Or,

we live in a godless community, Christian people and spiritual helps are scarce, and the very atmosphere of the place is surcharged with worldliness and impiety. But it is the world within, not the world without, that hinders us. We need not to get away from or out of the world, but to get the world out of us. Look at the surroundings of Enoch: he was not a recluse, forsaking God's world in order to find the world's God and Maker; read the record: "Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." In spite of family cares and home distractions, he "walked with God." Consider the state of society in his time. Dr. Murphy, commenting on this passage, says of the Hebrew original, "Here, for the first time, we have *God* with the definite article, with which it occurs more than four hundred times." Hence he translates, "Enoch walked with *the God*." The denial of the true God had already commenced. The language used in the Epistle of Jude shows that ungodliness was the characteristic of Enoch's time, and the name of Enoch's first son, Methuselah—meaning "man of the dart, or sword"—may indicate the unbrotherliness, the social disorder, or the feuds of those early days. As to his spiritual helps and privileges, it has been remarked by another that Enoch had no Sabbath, no Church, no Bible, and no Savior. Certainly he

had not these in the same sense in which we may say we have them. Yet under these adverse circumstances of family cares, general wickedness, and dearth of spiritual aids, Enoch, almost like Abdiel, described by Milton, was "faithful found among the faithless."

Enoch's fellowship with God is notable for its constancy: he "walked with God three hundred years." No wonder he was translated. Holding familiar converse with God for so long a time, growing better as the world grew worse, developing his soul for centuries after his body had attained its growth, spiritual gravity would almost draw him to the heavenly world, when God gave him permission to cut loose from earth. In comparison with such a record of constancy, how our vacillating experience and frequent lapses shame us. We have had seasons of fellowship with God; we remember these bright spots in our spiritual life, as one might remember the beautiful but infrequent oases in a desert through which he had journeyed. Our fellowship is occasional; Enoch's was constant; ours is impulsive, almost unnatural; his was habitual, and, therefore, natural.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told that Enoch's translation was "by faith." Of course the life of fellowship that prepared him for this translation, was a life of faith. He had full confidence in God, for he knew God. He was

a constant, loyal, happy man of God, because he was a man of faith. His life is imitable because we have the same means of conquering the world: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Let us use the means at our command, cultivate our spiritual nature, be constant in "walking with God," and realize the truth of a believer's remark, "I have as good a Savior as Saint Paul had."

SIMEON: OR, CHRIST REVEALED.

"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."—LUKE, 2:26.

Let us consider the *matter* of this revelation: before Simeon's death, the Messiah was to come and Simeon would see him. The word "Christ," which comes to us from the Greek, and the word "Messiah," which is of Hebrew origin, both mean "anointed," and refer to an ancient custom of inducting into office kings, priests and prophets. Jesus was the Lord's anointed, or "the Lord's Christ." He was Divinely chosen as the Savior of the world. All this is included in the double name so often used, Christ Jesus, or, Jesus Christ, meaning Anointed Savior. How great a privilege we count it to see the chosen of men—rulers, statesmen, orators, authors, warriors, leaders of their fellows, "kings of men." What crowds lined even the country roads in Wesley's last years, to get a glimpse of that mighty man of God. How the people thronged around La Fayette on his last visit to America. What surging seas of humanity welcomed our own Grant on his return from his journey round the world. Thus anxious are we to see the chosen of men; but Simeon was to

see the chosen of God, the Lord's anointed prophet, priest and king, of whom he had declared through Isaiah, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."

The Messiah's coming had been looked for and longed for by all who were familiar with the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. Among the Gentiles, even where the Jewish writings and doctrines were unknown, there were some expectations of a great Deliverer. Christ was the "Desire of all nations," and was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." How happy was Simeon's lot: his eyes were to see the fruition of the world's hopes and the fulfillment of God's promise of a Savior. As an individual, this revelation would be a source of great joy; as a patriot, his heart must have been filled with happiness that the chosen Jewish nation was soon to be blest by the advent of the Messiah; as a lover of the human race, Simeon would greatly rejoice, for the record shows that he understood the mission of Christ to be to all the world. It would seem that the exact time of Christ's coming was not revealed to Simeon; he was only assured that "he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

The *manner* of this revelation deserves notice. First, it was in answer to prayer. This is a

legitimate inference from the Greek word here translated "revealed." It properly signifies a response in reply to a request, and was used among the Greeks to denote an oracle or answer given to a worshiper who sought to learn something of the future. In some of the few instances of the use of this word in the New Testament, the connection shows that the revelation was in answer to prayer. The Vulgate so interprets the text, and the accurate translation is given in the Rhemish Testament, "He had received an answer from the Holy Ghost." This interpretation is in harmony with the statement in the preceding verse, that Simeon was "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." His heart was full of longing for the coming of the Messiah, and with prayer he was "waiting" for the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies.

The manner of the revelation is to be seen also in the statement that it was "by the Holy Ghost." How the Spirit communicated this joyful news is uncertain. It may have been in a dream, or in a waking vision, or by an impression on his mind, or by some other means. At a later date it is said, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." It was not so fully given, it was not generally given, but the specially devout souls of all the ages before Christ's coming, had manifestations of the Spirit. Christ sent the Spirit to

be with all his followers, and to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." How could Simeon be sure he was not in error as to the source of his supposed revelation? Fanatics often claim communications from God. But Simeon was a student of, and a believer in, the Scriptures. His hopes and prayers were founded on the inspired Word of God. Besides, he had evidently sought for additional knowledge and prayed that he might live to welcome the Lord's Anointed. The Divine consistency in making this special revelation to Simeon will further appear as we proceed.

We may well note the *man* to whom the Spirit communicated this revelation. God's spiritual favors, of this sort, are not scattered broadcast among his children. Many Christians are not sufficiently developed to receive the higher gifts of the Spirit. Spiritual vision, like natural, requires an eye as well as light; and there are many weak-eyed and near-sighted Christians, who never get a full view of spiritual things. Everything depends on character, sincerity, devotion. Of Simeon it is recorded that he "was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him." We may profitably study this description.

First, this man was "just," or righteous: he had integrity of character; he did his duties to his fellow-men; he was a moral man. The right

kind of men are lovers of their kind. "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." It is foolish to trust in our morality, instead of Christ; it is wicked to be proud of our morality; *but it is no sin to be a moral man.* So far, so good; and some so-called "religious" people would do well to cultivate downright honesty toward man.

But Simeon was more than just: he was also "devout"; that is, he had real reverence for God; he was a worshiper, and sought to do his duty to God, as well as to be upright in his relations to men. Piety is not an unnecessary addition to morality; much less is it a substitute for morality. It is simply an extension of the same principle of justice, or righteousness, to our relations to God. It is the natural accompaniment, the complement of morality, and essential to completeness of human development and to the rounding out of human character. There is nothing unnatural or unmanly in being religious; rather,

"A Christian is the highest style of man."

It is also said of Simeon, that he was "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." When the Savior was about to "leave the world and go unto the Father," he said to his disciples, in promising the Holy Spirit, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comfort-

er." Jesus was the Comforter whose place the Holy Spirit was to take. To him the reference is made in the words, "the Consolation of Israel." The thoughts and prayers of Simeon were centered on the "Lord's Christ." It was the business of his life, the sweet employment of his time, to study the Scriptures that announced the coming of the Savior, and to gaze with longing eyes and prayerful heart to discern the signs of the advent of the Messiah. Men whose thoughts and lives find their center in Christ, are well fitted to receive "an answer from the Holy Ghost" to their prayers.

It is added to this description of Simeon, that "the Holy Ghost was upon him." Not only did the Spirit give him a special revelation; he was with that devout man as a constant presence, an abiding guest, a continual inspiration. His experience was exceptional in those days: but we live under the dispensation of the Spirit, and all who will may have this blessed Comforter who, said the Master, is sent "that he may abide with you forever." May we be "just and devout," with the "Consolation of Israel" as our great theme; so will the Holy Ghost be our daily Companion.

Thus far, our study of this subject has considered only the *prophetic* revelation of Christ to Simeon; we must not close our investigation without considering the *personal* revelation by

which God fulfilled his promise. Having noted the matter, the manner, and the man, we now come to the *manifestation*. Simeon's home was in Jerusalem. He was evidently an aged man. Shortly after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt, and on their return settled in Nazareth. So far as we know, the child Jesus was never in the temple, or in Jerusalem, but once till he had reached the age of twelve years. That first visit was when his mother brought him on the occasion of her ceremonial "purification." But Simeon was in no danger of missing the sight of the "Lord's Christ": God keeps his promises. So the aged man "came by the Spirit into the temple" at exactly the right time for the beatific vision of which that Spirit had assured him. The omniscient Spirit brought about this manifestation. It is a privilege and a proof of our being the "sons of God," when we are "led by the Spirit of God." Simeon was in the temple, to welcome the temple's Lord on his first entrance into that holy place. "And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" So fully was this man under the influence of the Spirit, that he at once recognized the "Lord's Christ" in the "child Jesus."

How great his joy at the fruition of his hopes, the answer to his prayers, the fulfillment of God's promise. As he took the infant Savior in his arms, he must have "blessed God" with a full heart. The manifestation of Christ to a believing soul is always a cause of great happiness.

But this view of Christ also made Simeon feel that he could "depart in peace." He had lived to see the "Consolation of Israel" for whom he had been long "waiting." It seemed to him the supreme moment of his life had come, the object of his aspirations had been attained, and he was ready to leave the world. Nothing so prepares us to "see death," as a sight of the Savior. May none of us be called from the world till we have first "seen the Lord's Christ." We need not wait, as did Simeon, till old age or approaching death, for the Savior will manifest himself to us at any time, on very simple conditions: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." He who fails in securing this manifestation of Christ, knows not the truest happiness and greatest joy of life; and to postpone our seeking of the Savior, leaves us in danger of dying without a view of Christ revealed.

THE MIRAGE OF LIFE.

“The parched ground shall become a pool.”—ISAIAH, 35.7.

The mirage has been briefly defined as “an optical illusion arising from an unequal refraction in the lower strata of the atmosphere.” The word is applied to several classes of phenomena, but it is sufficient for our present purpose, to give a short description of the mirage of the desert. A quotation from Dr. Thomas Dick will enable all to get a clear understanding of this remarkable illusion.

“M. Monge, who accompanied the French army to Egypt, relates that, when in the desert between Alexandria and Cairo, the mirage of the blue sky was inverted, and so mingled with the sand below as to give to the desolate and arid wilderness an appearance of the most rich and beautiful country. They saw, in all directions, green islands, surrounded with extensive lakes of pure, transparent water. Nothing could be conceived more lovely and picturesque than the landscape. In the tranquil surface of the lakes, the trees and houses with which the islands were covered were strongly reflected with vivid and varied hues, and the party hastened forward

to enjoy the cool refreshments of shade and stream which these populous villages proffered to them. When they arrived, the lake on whose bosom they floated, the trees among whose foliage they were embowered, and the people who stood on the shore inviting their approach, had all vanished, and nothing remained but a uniform and irksome desert of sand and sky, with a few naked huts and ragged Arabs. Had they not been undeceived by their nearer approach, there was not a man in the French army who would not have sworn that the visionary trees and lakes had a real existence in the midst of the desert.

Dr. Clark observed precisely the same appearances at Rosetta. The city seemed surrounded with a beautiful sheet of water; and so certain was his Greek interpreter—who was unacquainted with the the country—of this fact, that he was quite indignant at an Arab who attempted to explain to him that it was a mere optical delusion. At length they reached Rosetta in about two hours, without meeting with any water; and, on looking back on the sand they had just crossed, it seemed to them as if they had waded through a vast blue lake.”

It is, no doubt, to this illusion of the desert, that the text refers. The Hebrew term translated “parched ground,” was long ago translated by Bishop Lowth, in his work on Isaiah,

“glowing sand,” and explained by him as an allusion to the mirage. Critical scholars generally take this view of the text. The Revised Version translates it the same as Bishop Lowth, but puts “mirage” as another rendering, which would make the text read, “The mirage shall become a pool.” A careful reading of this chapter will make it evident that under the figure of remarkable changes in nature, the future joy and glory of God’s ancient people were illustrated. Better days were coming: “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” The disappointments of the chosen people should cease; the good that had been seeming, should become real; where the illusory lake proved to be only “glowing sand,” should be refreshing water: “The mirage shall become a pool.”

This chapter seems to be a prophecy of Gospel blessings. Its completest fulfillment is certainly in the privileges and gifts of the spiritual kingdom established by Christ. The text has a natural application to the “living water” which our Savior came to give to those who found elsewhere only a mirage. The mirage deceives because it looks exactly like the prime necessity of life—water. The world appears to offer all the elements of happiness: it promises much, but it does not keep its promise. See how eagerly men rush toward the apparent water, only to find

hot, "glowing sand." Let us note a few of the illusions of the mirage of life.

The world promises man great refreshment and happiness through his senses. Multitudes are persuaded that in this desert world there is, just before them, a stream or sea of sensual delight. They live to eat, or live to gratify some other appetite or desire of their lower nature. But how difficult to be an epicure without developing into a glutton. The daintiest food, though it please the palate, becomes a source of discomfort, pain and disease to the gourmand. For the privilege of gratifying his taste, he pays the price of uneasy days and restless nights. What a lake of delights seems to exist in those stimulants that for a time spiritualize the bodily senses and quicken the action of man's mental powers. Poets in almost every age have pictured the delights of the wine cup. But how soon that fair enchantress makes a slave and a physical wreck of those who listen to her voice. The delights of vision are not of an enduring character.

"Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
Fades in the eye and palls upon the sense."

Solomon said, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing." Music, like all other charms of hearing, soon wearies us; or, a cultivated musical ear is oftener offended than pleased. Whether the sensualism be gross or refined, how unreasonable to expect that

man, a spiritual dweller in a house with five doors called senses, will find the happiness of his real self, his higher nature, in the gratification of his animal appetites.

—“Blush at fondness for a life
Which sends celestial souls on errands vile,
To cater for the sense; and serve at boards
Where every ranger of the wilds, perhaps
Each reptile, justly claims our upper hand.
Luxurious feast! a soul, a soul immortal,
In all the dainties of a brute bemired!”

Truly, the promised delights of sensualism of every grade, are usually low in degree, and always low in kind, and so are but the mirage of life.

Wealth, as affording an opportunity for the gratification of the senses, or for some other low form of pleasure, is almost universally desired and often eagerly sought. But this mirage often flees as we move toward it, for few become rich. Many are like the man who said, “I set out in life resolved to be worth fourteen hundred thousand dollars; I have the fourteen, but the ciphers bother me.” But if we reach this semblance of water, it is only dirt, “parched ground.” Besides the failure of sensual joys to satisfy, the cares which wealth brings may well suggest the woe which the prophet Habakkuk pronounces on “him that ladeth himself with thick clay.”

The world promises great happiness through place and power, and hence ambition lures men on towards the refreshing waters which the illusive mirage spreads out before them. But a great ambition is almost sure to be disappointed

in reaching the summit for which it strives. The first places are few. Not many men now living can fill the office of President of this country. Even for the lower—yes, for the lowest—offices, there are many, often hundreds of aspirants; *disappointment* comes to a *multitude* when an *appointment* comes to *one*. Men of great ambition have died of broken hearts at the failure of their plans and hopes. The few whom fickle fortune favors, find not the happiness whose attainment the world promised. The historian Gibbon records his opinion that the possession of a crown never satisfied the cravings of an ambitious mind. And how many have reached the higher rounds of the ladder, only to fall, with crushed hopes and bleeding hearts, to the dead level of our common humanity, or to a level below that. Mark the great Napoleon at the zenith of his power and influence. Hundreds of thousands of men followed him to battle; all Europe shook beneath his tread, and his name inspired fear in the hearts of the rulers of nations. What hosts of British and Prussian soldiers it required to win the battle of Waterloo by a hair's-breadth. But how few soldiers it required to keep this "man of destiny" on the island of Saint Helena till his death. He was deceived by the mirage of life.

Knowledge and culture, which are greatly to be desired for their usefulness, are disappointing

as to the pleasure they afford to those who pursue them as the object of life. "Much study is a weariness of the flesh," and the unattainable enlarges its proportions according to one's progress in knowledge. In a state of mental and bodily vigor, one may find a pleasure in the pursuit of knowledge, as well as in its acquisition. But unsolvable problems perplex the students of history, science, literature—indeed not only is it true that

"Much learning shows how little mortals know,"

but how much they only "know in part," or can not know at all with any degree of certainty. The world is too large, the heaven is too high, the subjects for study are too numerous, for man to grasp all before this life's close. He can never hope, in this world, to get beyond the primary department of nature's school. Let him make as great attainments as the great Newton, he must die feeling that "the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me." How disappointing is this to one whose sole aim in life is to be a knower and a thinker. He finds that life is a mirage.

All things which this world has to offer, can not satisfy man's craving for happiness. Lord Byron said he could count up eleven perfectly happy days in his life, but he doubted if he should live long enough "to make out the round dozen." A noted German scholar thought the

really happy days of his life (a full day of happiness, only, being reckoned,) would amount to about a month. Lord Chesterfield, wealthy, cultured, honored, the pet of England's nobility and royalty, confessed, near the close of his life, that he had got so little out of the world that he would not care to live his life over again. What then, let me ask, is the real value of this world's "promise to pay"? It beckons us onward by most enchanting landscapes; it paints the blue sky on the desert, and calls the picture, "water"; and though our own experience confirms the testimony of others, we continue to believe that the lake of refreshing water we see *now*, is real, and not "glowing sand." When shall we become convinced that life is a mirage?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ will do for us what the delusive world promises to do; it will not mock our hopes by giving hot sand instead of cool water: it will make good the words of the text, "The mirage shall become a pool." Real water shall be given, for "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." You who have been deceived by the mirage of life, come and find refreshment in the "living water" which the Savior gives. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

See that young man, with plenty of money, starting out to "see the world" and "have a good time." He does not see or enjoy what he

anticipated. Money gone, time wasted, morals damaged, soul injured, clothing in rags, body wasted and hunger-bitten, he has been deceived by the mirage of life. But mark! he is now undeceived; his good sense returns; he becomes thoughtful; he is humbled and repentant; he sees one chance of measurable comfort; (for he does not expect much happiness now, because his experience has well-nigh destroyed his hopes); he makes a resolve, "I will arise and go to my father." You know what a welcome his father gave him, what a grand reception was held in the home of wealth at the return of the penniless boy. At last he found, at home, the happiness he vainly sought in a "far country." Poor, disappointed wanderer, is your faith in the world lost? Do not lose faith in God; do not despair of happiness: come home to your Father. All your fondest hopes shall be more than realized. However strongly the joy and satisfaction of a Christian life may be presented to you, a thorough experience of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ will make you feel like saying, "The half was not told me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH CHRIST?

“What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?”—
MATTHEW, 27:22.

The question of the text was asked by Pontius Pilate, sitting on the “judgment-seat,” of the accusers of the prisoner at the bar. The judge “knew that for envy they had delivered” Jesus. No evidence had been produced, for, a moment later, Pilate asks the prosecutors and persecutors, “What evil hath he done?” Yet this Roman judge asks a Jewish mob led by men bent on destroying Christ, what he shall do with the prisoner before him.

It is evident that Pilate must have asked of himself, and more than once, the question he proposed to the Jews, “What shall I do then with Jesus?” He was troubled by the presence of his prisoner. The Savior, accused, bound, envied, hated, conscious of the outcome of this travesty of a trial, was calm, dignified, silent; Pilate, the judge, was excited, confused, troubled. Yet that judge never, before or after, had a case brought before him so easy to decide as a question of justice. His own judgment of the merits of the case was, “I find in him no fault at all.” His

conscience seems to have acted as counsel for the prisoner. His wife pleaded against the wrong of punishing "that just man." The Judge, in giving sentence of death, calls Jesus, "this just person."

No wonder, then, that Pilate was troubled as to what he should do with the prisoner. He knew he ought to release him. But how could he do that, with so great a mob crying out so loudly and so often, "Crucify him"? This was the cause of the judge's trouble and anxiety. There was a battle raging within his breast. When a man's foes are "of his own household," he can endure it, if it is for conscience' sake he is hated and persecuted; but when, as in Pilate's case, a man's foes are in his own heart and mind, when conscience and judgment are fighting against expediency and wrong, when the *man* in him tries to shame the *demagogue* in him, when Pilate, the judge, rebukes Pilate, the governor, is it strange he should be troubled? Every man who has some of his manhood left, will have an internal conflict if, on some specially important occasion, he attempts to substitute expediency for right, popularity for duty. That was a noble sentiment which an American statesman expressed: "I would rather be right than be President."

Pilate resolved to do what he could to make peace in his own heart, by endeavoring to rid

himself of the responsibility of deciding the case before him; and at the same time to keep peace with the accusers of Jesus, by yielding measurably to their demands. He found this temporizing course beset with many difficulties, and it resulted, as all temporizing in such a case must, in the triumph of wrong. For our profit, and with applications to our own experience as we proceed, let us trace the efforts of this Roman judge to save his conscience without doing his duty.

First, Pilate tried to answer the question—"What shall I do then with Jesus?"—by attempting to turn his prisoner over to the council or court of the Jews. Within certain limits, the Roman government permitted the Jews to decide questions of their own law and their own race. Pilate knew that Jesus was a Jew, and that it was for their opposition to him as a religious teacher, that the Jewish leaders had secured his arrest, and had brought him before his tribunal. Hence he no doubt hoped for relief from responsibility, when he said, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." But the Jews to whom this offer was made, would be satisfied with nothing short of the death of Jesus: their answer showed this, and at the same time informed the governor that they would not accept his offer—"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." They were re-

solved to keep the case before a court which had authority to pronounce a death sentence.

We can not rid ourselves of personal responsibility as to what we shall do with Christ, by getting some religious council, some body of men who understand this matter, to decide for us; Pilate failed, and we must fail. How many entrust this personal question to the church to which they belong; they believe what the councils and the authorities of their church have taught; they consider themselves clear of responsibility if others will assume it; they endeavor to merge themselves into the great mass of Christians, and so lose their individual concern as to this great question. But each of us has a conscience of his own, each of us has a judgment of his own, (if he will exercise it) each of us has sins of his own, and, if we are saved from sin and hell, *each of us must have a Savior of his own*. Friend, put that question to yourself with the emphasis on the personal pronoun: "What shall *I* do then with Jesus."

In the course of Pilate's consideration of this case, a statement was made by some of the people, that Jesus "stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself

also was at Jerusalem at that time." Happy mention of Galilee! Happy thought of Pilate to have Herod try his own subject! Happy relief from trouble and responsibility! Pilate, your second attempt will not succeed. Herod, after questioning and misusing Jesus, "sent him again to Pilate."

Perhaps we have tried to get some individual to settle the question of our duty to Christ; some man in authority, like Herod, to whom such a question properly belongs: it is within his "jurisdiction." Not that Herod knew much of Jesus, except by hearsay: for we read that he had long wished to see Jesus, and "hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." To such a man, with no personal knowledge of the case, with no sympathy with Christ, with a coarse nature that, like Herod's, will maltreat and mock the Savior—to such a one, multitudes have endeavored to commit their responsibility. A blatant infidel gives us his opinion, his rhetoric, his jokes, his blasphemy, and we felicitate ourselves that we need be at no further trouble as to that perplexing question. But as Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate, so the Savior comes back to us. The question has not been answered, "What shall I do then with Jesus?"

Pilate next made an attempt to settle the troublesome question by a compromise. After Jesus had been sent back by Herod, Pilate sum-

moned the Jewish authorities and declared that he had "found no fault in this man," nor had Herod. Now, Judge Pilate, what will you "do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" You will say, will you not, "I find the accused not guilty. Prisoner, you are discharged"? No; this is the language of the judge, the great compromiser: "I will therefore chastise him and release him." Why should a judge propose to "chastise" an innocent man? The reason is evident; he must do something to appease the people. The tiger-mob clamored for blood. The judge was not willing to yield to the demand for the crucifixion of Jesus, but he would give them a taste of blood, by severely punishing the innocent man. Did the compromise succeed? The rulers and the people still cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." Three times did Pilate urge the people to accept the compromise, only to increase their demand that Jesus should be crucified. Thus failed the effort of this temporizing judge to save a part of his conscience without sacrificing his popularity.

In his attempt to compromise with duty in his dealings with Christ, Pilate has millions of imitators. They are by no means ready to condemn Jesus to death, or to say he suffered death justly. They do not join with the vulgar crowd in their hatred and blasphemy of the Savior. Like Pilate, they are convinced of the innocence

—nay, more, of the sinlessness—of Jesus, and their better judgment urges them to do their whole duty to him. They, like Pilate, have learned that there is something exceptional in the Savior's nature and office: his conduct is in harmony with his claims to be the Son of God, the Monarch of a kingdom "not of this world," the divinely ordained "Witness to the truth." They see that it would be a high crime and a great danger for them to treat Jesus as an ordinary man; and as the governor "was the more afraid" when he heard that Christ claimed to be the Son of God, so they feel that it is dangerous to do less than their whole duty to King Jesus. But to do their whole duty would require them to become, in the fullest sense, Christians, and some selfish, worldly motives urge them to try a compromise. They will give Christ part of what is his due; they will not utterly reject him or ignore his claims. They will give some sort of observance to the Lord's Day; they will not absent themselves wholly from the house of God; they will put the Bible in a prominent place in their homes; they will aid in supporting the preaching of the Gospel. But they are not ready to do full justice to their Redeemer: not willing to grant "the subjection of the mind by faith, the subjection of the heart by love, and the subjection of the will by obedience." Friend, if you are thus dealing with the

question, "What shall I do with Jesus?"—you are doing as Pilate did. You are a time-server, and, judging you by the motives which you heed, is it not true that, with all your leanings toward duty, with all your regard for Christ, you are still a worldling?

At the passover feast, then in progress, it was customary for the governor to release to the people any prisoner whom they desired. While the crowd was gathered before the judgment-seat, accusing Jesus, the people cried out, asking the governor to comply with this custom. Pilate seized the opportunity to turn custom to account, by proposing to liberate Jesus. To add to the force of his argument to the people, he named Barabbas, a prisoner held for insurrection and murder, and asked the people which he should release, Barabbas or Jesus. It no doubt seemed to him that the Jews could not do otherwise than choose the release of Jesus, one of their own nation, rather than that of a man like Barabbas. But the people, instigated by the chief priests, concluded to "ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus." Thus failed Pilate's endeavor to do his duty to Christ by compliance with a custom.

Many in our day are seeking to accomplish the same result in a similar way. They will try to keep their consciences clear and to show their regard for Christ, by following custom, especial-

ly by attending to religious customs: by observing feasts and fasts, by being religious on Sundays and devout during Lent, by complying with the regulations of the church to which they belong—in a word, to regulate their religious deportment, instead of working at the reformation of their characters and the cultivation of their religious life. Such may be good churchmen, but they are poor specimens of Christians.

Driven at last by the failure of his plans, by the clamor of the people, and, especially by their threat to accuse him to the Emperor—"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar"—this Roman judge "gave sentence that it should be as they required," and "delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified." Yet, though the Jews had no authority to take life, though Pilate had said to Jesus, "I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee," he sought, after pronouncing the unrighteous sentence, to throw the responsibility on the people and the circumstances, and thus to quiet his troubled conscience. So he "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.'" They were willing to accept the responsibility, and cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." Their sin was greater than Pilate's, but

his sin was great in being a demagogue while acting as judge, and in giving legal sanction to the greatest outrage on justice the world has ever known. Rome ruled a good part of the world. Pilate was a Roman officer, and would have been sustained, in any lawful course, by the whole power of the Roman government. He was anxious to release Jesus, he made several efforts to release him by strategy, he had the power to release him, but, to "content the people," he sentenced Jesus to crucifixion, and then tried to throw all the responsibility on the Jews.

Perhaps some of us, having personally and practically rejected Christ, are trying to ease our consciences by putting the blame on other people, or on our circumstances. As we are situated, we say we can not do exactly right; we do wrong because others do wrong. The sharp practices of our fellow-tradesmen make it impossible to be honest—*without losing money*. The general irreligiousness of our neighbors makes it impossible to be a Christian—*without being singular*. Oh that God would impress us that the great question is not what the masses of the people do or want to do with Christ, but rather, "What shall *I* do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?"

Sad result of a judge's indecision and wrong decision. Justice was trampled under foot, truth

was slain, sin was triumphant, good men mourned, wicked men rejoiced, and all hell shouted "Victory!" till every fiend was hoarse.

But stop! We have mistaken the nature and the results of this trial. It is well to sympathize with Jesus in his sufferings; but we must not forget that he came to die, that he was a willing sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that he is now glorified. His crucifixion-day is now known as "Good Friday," his resurrection has given us the Lord's Day, the Easter rejoicing, the hope of heaven. Pontius Pilate and the Jewish nation were the parties on trial; and God, sitting in judgment, pronounced them guilty of rejecting his Son. Pilate, who feared the loss of his office, lost it a few years later, and died in political disgrace, probably by his own hand. The Jews were not so much the accusers of Christ, as the accused before God. He pronounced sentence on them, and the world has seen it executed. The Roman power whose aid they invoked to destroy Jesus, began the punishment of this wicked nation. They said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." *It has been on them.* They cried, "Crucify him!"—and not many years later, a historian of their own says the Romans crucified Jews in Jerusalem till there were lacking wood for crosses and places to stand the crosses. It is unsafe to reject Jesus Christ.

As Jesus stood, silently and patiently waiting

for Pilate's decision, so, by the means of grace, by his Word, by his ordinances, by his Church, by his Spirit, he waits to see how you will answer the question, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus, which is called Christ?" But *he* is not on trial; it is *you* who are on trial, deciding your own destiny in deciding what you will do with him.

We have been studying the proceedings before a judgment-seat. But there is another judgment-seat, and Christ will be the Judge. Before him shall stand Pontius Pilate, Jews, Gentiles, "all nations," "the dead, small and great." The question then and there will not be, "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?"—but, "What will Jesus, who is Christ, do with me?" What will be his decision in your case? *His decision depends on yours.*

ABEL: OR, THE SPEAKING DEAD.

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”—**HEBREWS, 11:4.**

“Dead men tell no tales,” is a saying which passes for truth among criminals who think a dead witness of their villainy will be sure not to appear against them. But the saying is as false as the hearts of the men who think it true. Abel was dead; yet his murderer heard the great Judge declaring, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground,” and received his sentence of banishment with a confession of guilt. King David learned that dead Uriah had told the “living God” the story of the double crime: for Nathan, the Lord’s messenger, repeated the tale in parable, and, when the king had condemned the crime, said, “Thou art the man.” John the Baptist was slain by order of Herod; but though that ruler’s creed did not include a belief in a resurrection, his guilty conscience made him believe that the miracle-working Christ was John the Baptist risen from the dead. Jesus of Nazareth, dead, ceased for three days to rebuke the Jewish nation, but for eighteen and a half centuries the “story of the Cross” has been shaming the Jew and saving the world;

while the "King of the Jews," whom they rejected, has ruled them "with a rod of iron," and has become "King of men."

"His voice is hushed in death" is a trite remark, but is true only on the surface. The martyred Lincoln still speaks of "charity for all and malice towards none," still pleads that "governments of the people, by the people and for the people, may not perish from the earth." Often, indeed, death increases the power of the voice so that millions hear it. To some of the methods in which the dead speak to us and live among us, let us now turn.

The dead live and speak by their example. What a man is and what he does, is often a mightier force after his death than before. This is especially true of men who are in advance of their generation. The "reformers before the Reformation," accomplished little in their lifetime as compared with the work of Luther and his colaborers; but their example was a powerful agency in stimulating their successors to plead and labor for "freedom to worship God." John Howard toiled almost alone to improve the sanitary and moral condition of the prisons of Europe; yet his example has raised up societies and inspired individuals in almost every part of the civilized world. The example of men and women who have moved in the humbler spheres of life, often lives and works wonders

when the living worker has passed beyond mortal sight. Each of us can name one or more of the dead whose example has done much to mold our characters.

Many speak after their death by their words of counsel or advice. Often parental counsel and entreaty are unheeded till the death of the parent emphasizes them. How many have been won from sin by words of father and mother, long after their parents have left the world. John Newton rejected the counsel of his Christian mother, became a great blasphemer, and engaged in the African slave-trade. But years after his mother went to her reward, Newton, filled with a sense of sin and fear, cried from the slave-ship, "God of my mother, have mercy on me!" He became a devout and eminent minister of Christ, and wrote many hymns which will probably be sung for ages to come.

Men speak after death by their influence. Influence is as powerful and as subtle in its operation as electricity. It depends not only on what a man is, what he says, what he does, but on some unexplained law by which a special bond exists between the soul of a man, and the souls of certain of his fellow-men who are drawn to him by an invisible and wonderful power, as the magnet draws the needle to itself, and magnetizes it. Thus, within a certain limit, a man stamps his individuality, his spirit, on some of

his fellow-men, and through them he, "being dead, yet speaketh." And this subtle influence is probably about as near to perpetual motion as anything is likely to come. When it will stop, when once started, even in this world, who can tell?

Men live and work in the world, speak after death, by their discoveries and inventions. How mightily James Watt and George Stephenson are speaking in the steam power that is doing so much of the world's work. Hear the voice of Morse in the clicking in ten thousand telegraph offices. Note that most of the manufacturing is done by machinery invented by men now dead. Their power in the world has increased since their death.

A man's writings often live when he is dead. His books contain the best that there was in him; they are, as they are often called, his "works." By this means, many dead men are speaking to the present generation, and some will speak to all coming generations. And these literary works seem not only to live, but to beget other books, and to mold the characters of men. Baxter wrote—first among his numerous books—"The Saints' Everlasting Rest." Philip Doddridge was led to Christ by that book, and, in addition to his commentary and many other works, he wrote the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." By it William Wilberforce,

the friend of the slave, was converted. Wilberforce wrote a book entitled a "Practical View of Religion," which has had, like all the books here named, a large circulation, and which was blest to the conversion of Legh Richmond, whose "Dairyman's Daughter" has been translated into more than fifty languages. Homer's works inspired Alexander the Great. In turn, Julius Cesar was inspired by the career of Alexander. The "Commentaries on the Gallic War," written by Cesar, made Charles XII of Sweden one of the bloodiest warriors of the world's history. Even in dead languages, in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, dead men are speaking with mighty force to the living. Moses has been dead for more than three thousand years; the language in which he wrote, has long been a dead language; but see how Moses speaks in the science, the legislation and the morals of the present. David and other Hebrew psalmists have been dead for ages, but how they speak to millions of the present day by those matchless songs of devotion.

But it is not only true that by these and other means the dead speak; it is also true that each of the dead, like each of the living, has a voice of his own. What any man will say to the world after his death, depends on what he says, what he does, and what he is, before his death, and on the conditions and surroundings of his

earthly life, and, sometimes, on the circumstances of his death. A special case is brought before us in the text: dead Abel is represented as speaking. What does he say? Let us see if we can hear his words.

Dead Abel says there is a future life. He was the second child born into this world. He was cut off in the morning of his life. He was slain for his righteousness and piety. Had he been less faithful to God, he might have lived to a good old age. As certainly as there is a just God, that fragmentary life of Abel's, that death of the first religious martyr, are in proof of life after death. It can not be that, under the government of a just God, we are to see

"Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne."

Every case of suffering for righteousness' sake, is a Divine pledge of eternal life, for God will not permit the martyr-spirit to be unrewarded, will not suffer sin to be to a man's real and final advantage. "The triumphing of the wicked is short." The Savior promised his disciples a hundred-fold in this life, "with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life." Stephen, for his fidelity to Christ, was stoned to death by his countrymen. But he saw heaven opened to welcome him, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Let Cain and his successors do their worst: God will take care of his own.

Abel says that the true religion for fallen man

is a religion of sacrifice. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." But Abel "also brought of the firstlings of his flock." Jehovah's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, and his rejection of Cain's thank-offering, were evidently due to the character of the offerings as well as to the characters of the two men. Abel offered *life* in sacrifice, an acknowledgment of guilt, and a type of the redeeming, suffering, dying Savior of the world. Cain, wicked as he was, murderer as he soon became, was self-righteous, and hence his offering made no acknowledgment of sin and expressed no hope of or desire for a Savior. In these days we need to give special heed to the words of dead Abel. There are men who claim to be religious, and call themselves Christians, and yet deny the great Sacrifice. To them Jesus is an example worthy of imitation, a teacher worthy of reverence, but not a Savior. Let us repeat and emphasize, in every possible manner, the words of Abel on this vital subject. Let Christ be set forth as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The message that will bring joy and salvation to men is, "Man is a great sinner; Christ is a great Savior." High views of the "dignity of human nature" generally go with low views of the work of Christ, while low views of man's moral condition usually accompany exalted views of the nature and office of the Lord Jesus.

Abel says, to emphasize his words as to the religion of sacrifice, that God demands the obedience of faith. It was not a matter of the superior appropriateness of Abel's offering, but the fact seems to be that God instituted sacrifice immediately after his promise of a Redeemer, made to fallen man. Jehovah has the right to say how he shall be worshiped, and how man is to be redeemed. Under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, God was approached through animal sacrifices, significant of sin and typical of the death of Christ who was the "Lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times." Since the coming of Christ, it is God's plan that sinners shall be saved by approaching the mercy-seat in the name of Jesus, the "one Mediator between God and man." Abel showed his faith by obedience to the Divine requirement. We are not at liberty to choose our own way of approaching God. And if, like Cain, we come in our own way instead of God's way, we shall find our offering unaccepted and our hearts still unhappy.

One more truth which we get from this martyr who, "being dead, yet speaketh," is this: to the true worshiper, God gives the witness of acceptance. Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." He

knew that his sacrifice was accepted, and that God was his Friend. Surely, in these days of clearer light and greater privileges, the believing, obedient worshiper need not be in doubt as to his acceptance with God. He may know that the Almighty loves him and is well-pleased with him; that he is "accepted in the Beloved." How great the joy that comes from this assurance. How it increases our love to God our Father. How it helps us to realize that we bear a personal relation to Christ. How it transforms duty to delight, by substituting love for a person, in the place of fidelity to principle. How it enables us to be witnesses, to give testimony to the blessed results of the life of faith. Let us seek this assurance of the favor of God.

Abel, so far as the record informs us, was the first man who died. But unnumbered millions of men have since lived and died, and we shall soon join the number who have gone "the way of all the earth." We have been listening to the voice of Abel, one of the speaking dead. What shall be the voice, and what the language, with which we shall speak to the world after we have left it? What influence shall we leave behind us? What words and works shall represent us when we are no longer among the living? What Christian charity, what enterprise for the benefit and salvation of our fellow-men, shall speak to coming generations, and convince them we used our money in a Christian way? Shall

those whom we have helped in the struggle of life, "rise up and call us blessed"? Shall our children be helped to live and prepared to die, by the counsel and the example by which we shall speak to them after our lips are silent? All depends on what we are, what we say, and what we do, before we die. Even in reference to our influence alone, we shall always be at work in this world; and we may well feel that we should live not for the present, but for the future. A painstaking artist, whose careful slowness a friend reproved, replied, "I work for eternity." Let each of us work with the same object in view; not a selfish desire for the perpetuation of our name, but a purpose to leave behind us something to show that our horizon was not bounded by our grave.

Our subject has led us to study only the earthly side of our future. But we must not forget that there is a personal immortality, as well as an immortality of influence. The character of our life after death, as well as the character of our influence, is dependent on the present. It is a solemn thing to live, when we keep in mind the endless results of living. It is blessed to live, if we are living as we ought to live. Each duty done, each cross borne, each deed of kindness wrought, will be a perpetual blessing to coming ages, and an addition to our happiness in the deathless world. Let us live as becomes those who expect to live forever.

DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

“When he slew them, then they sought him.”—PSALMS, 78:34.

The text is one of many passages of scripture teaching that impending death often leads to a seeking of God. It evidently means that the fickle and faithless people were partly, or temporarily, aroused to their real condition, by the presence of some death-dealing agency which God sent among them. In prospect of death, or fearing death might be very near, they were anxious to make their peace with God. This may be called death-bed repentance, and to that subject let us give our thought.

This sort of repentance is very common; indeed so common as to justify the familiar line,

‘Men live as fools; as fools they can not die.’

It is said that the Circassians, a kind of mongrel Christians, divide their lives between sin and devotion, dedicating their youth to rapine and their old age to repentance. In ancient times, a man being asked whether he would prefer to be Crœsus, the richest man, or Socrates, the wisest and best, replied, “I would like to be Crœsus in life and Socrates in death.” Homer tells us, as versified by Pope,

“The weakest atheist-wretch all heaven defies,
But shrinks and shudders when the thunder flies.”

The practice known as “delayed baptism” grew up early in the history of the Christian Church, the object being to have one’s sin washed away just before he died. Extreme unction in the Roman Catholic Church is designed to give a dying man the benefit of a special preparation for death. Many, if not the majority, of criminals condemned to death, seek religious counsel and give themselves to religious exercises, and frequently murderers profess conversion and preparation for heaven, on the scaffold.

The commonness of this death-bed repentance suggests several things to which we may give a brief consideration. (1.) Belief in, or fear of, a future state. Men are not, naturally or generally, atheists and materialists. (2.) A perceived connection between the present and the future, or the relation of character to destiny. In spite of all theories as to future opportunities for repentance and reformation, men would like to leave this world with a full preparation for heaven. (3.) Human sinfulness. The average man does not feel that he is prepared to die. The near prospect of death makes him feel that he is not ready for judgment. (4.) The low views of sin commonly entertained. Sin is good enough to live in, but not good enough to die in. A whole life of wickedness is to be neutralized

at the last moment by sorrow at impending punishment. (5.) The high estimate placed on dying experience and testimony. "How did he die?"—is often considered of more importance than "How did he live?"

To these remarks it seems proper to add that, practically, many who are not willing to admit it, believe there is a sacramental efficacy belonging to this late repentance. They will prepare for heaven, not by a life of piety and righteousness, but by setting their house in order after death knocks at the door. The sudden death of a good man shocks some people because they think that, being called from earth without any warning, his soul may may not have been in in a thoroughly heavenly mood. By such views, a great part of man's probation for eternity is put into the closing hours, or minutes, of his life. It is greatly to be regretted that, in order to strengthen his argument against the doctrine of probation after death, the great Monday-lecturer of Boston should crowd so much probation, and put so many possibilities into the "hour and article of death." Of course the possibility of genuine repentance at the close of a misspent life, need not be denied. And if one has not repented earlier, it is well for him to repent just before he goes to his final account. A dying man may well concentrate his thoughts on death and judgment, sin and the Savior; he who has

given these great matters little or no attention for all the years of his life, may wisely consider them while his last opportunity is slipping away. But let us not suppose that such late repentance, even if genuine, is as good as an earlier repentance and a Christian life. It can not undo the evil of a wicked life; it does not prepare the soul for so high a place in the future world; it does not give an abundant entrance into heaven, but, like a ship-wrecked mariner, such a one reaches the other shore with his spiritual life barely saved, and must start into the next life comparatively poor.

But possibilities are not of as great value as probabilities, and the importance of this subject is such that we may well consider what is probable. If we intend to "take our chances" on being saved by death-bed repentance, it is well to "calculate the chances," to see if we had not better change our intention. Can we afford to take any chances, to run any risk of losing heaven?

You may hear people quoting the general promises of the Bible to penitent souls, as an argument for the efficacy of repentance, however late. But all must admit that the *quality* of the repentance is all-important, and to this our subject will soon bring us. Strangely enough, the parable of the laborers, in which those hired at the eleventh hour received as much as those who

had worked all day, is quoted as favoring the value of delayed, or "eleventh-hour" repentance. That parable plainly refers to the early call of the Jews, and the later call of the Gentiles. Besides, the reason why the laborers who began at the eleventh hour, did not begin earlier, was that they could not get work earlier: "No man hath hired us." The man who imitates these laborers, should repent at the first opportunity, not at the last. The efficacy of death-bed repentance is often argued from the Savior's promise to the penitent thief on the cross. But it is probable that this man had no knowledge of Christ till he was crucified beside him. It is reasonable to suppose that he learned all he knew of the Savior, after he saw him at Calvary; that the Savior's conduct under suffering convinced him that the title "King," on the Lord's cross, was well bestowed, and that his kingdom was "not of this world." His first conviction of the true character of Jesus was immediately followed by confession of sin and prayer to Christ. We may well, one has remarked, admire the promptness of his repentance, rather than reproach him for its tardiness.

Have you ever noticed the Savior's warnings of the danger of waiting till the last hour before making our preparations to meet him? Two of them are recorded together, one at the close of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and the

other at the opening of the next chapter. The first of these declares the blessedness of the servant who does his duty in his master's absence, and is found at his post on his master's return; and says of the "evil servant" who takes advantage of the delay of his master's coming, to live a riotous life, that "the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." If the servant had only known just when his master would return, he would probably have sobered up and put things in order. Does not this parable teach the wickedness and the danger of living as we please while God seems to leave us to ourselves? May we not learn from it that we may be surprised in the midst of our sins by a summons to meet our Lord? The next chapter opens with the parable of the virgins. The bridegroom came so unexpectedly that by the time the foolish virgins had their lamps filled and trimmed, "the door was shut," and they were excluded from the feast. The Master gave the moral of this parable in these words, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." The previous parable was prefaced with similar words: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

We may well consider some special difficulties that lie in the way of trusting to death-bed repentance for a preparation for heaven. One of these is, as suggested and enforced by the parables just considered, that we may not have time to repent. Sudden deaths from accident or disease afford no time to make special preparation for eternity. Many diseases, and many medical remedies, produce unconsciousness, and the patient is never aware of his condition.

We may lack a disposition to repent. If it is too great a task for us to break off our sins now, will added years and strengthened habits of sin make it easier to repent? Are we not assured by experience that sin hardens the heart, and that habit becomes second nature? A man who had reached the age of a hundred years, was asked if he were a Christian, and, answering in the negative, was asked what he was going to do, so old, and without hope. He replied, "Oh, I intend to become a Christian before I die." The clergyman who related this incident, in which he was himself the questioner, added that the man died without hope four years later.

But, supposing we have both the time and the disposition for this late repentance: will not our repentance be defective on account of our life-long delay? It is something we purposed to leave till the last hours of life, that we might

live in sin against the God whose mercy we intend to implore when he is about to call us to account for our godless lives. It is, shall we say, a sharp trick on which we have been calculating, so that, after enjoying the "pleasures of sin," we may not suffer its pangs, but have all the delights of the saints in heaven. We aim to make the most of this world by being sinners, and the most of the next world by a sudden transformation into saints. We will cheat the justice of God, and deceive his mercy. But can we thus mock God? And will not the near or immediate prospect of death essentially change the nature of our repentance, and render it valueless?

Will not such repentance be imperfect on account of mental and bodily weakness? We sin in health and strength, we purpose to repent when health and strength have failed. Our life and strength are given to self and sin, our dying hours and our weakness are given to repentance. When the passions are dormant through old age or sickness, it is easy to reprove ourselves for giving way to "unbridled appetite." When we are no longer able to enjoy the world, it is no wonder we bewail our folly and sin in giving our lives to the pursuit of ignoble ends. But is there not great danger that our case will illustrate Dryden's line,

"Repentance is but want of power to sin"?

If we had our former strength, if the fires of passion were still burning, would we give ourselves to repentance and prayer? Is it not to be feared that such late repentance is *too late*?

On account of this physical and mental weakness, there will be much danger of self-deception. We no longer feel the "motions of sins;" we concentrate what little power of thought is left us, on our sins and our Savior. We have no desire to sin, because we have no power to sin in our old way. We are easily persuaded that a great change has come over us, and we feel that we are prepared for death. Many cases are on record of such willingness to die, and recovery to health has killed all the good resolves, the repentance has been repented of, and friends have been reproved for obtaining promise of amendment by taking advantage of the weakness of mind and body during sickness. It must be sad for an unsaved man to be self-deceived till death undeceives him.

Death-bed repentance is likely to be insincere on account of the pressure of motives. In times of danger or of threatened death, many blasphemers have prayed most earnestly, but have resumed their oaths when the danger was over. "It is fear that cries out in agony; not penitence that prays." Witness Pharaoh's frequent promises to Moses, while a plague was on Egypt. Mark his anxiety, after the death of the first-

born, to have the Israelites leave the country. But note that he soon changed his mind, broke his promise, and went out with his army to bring back his slaves. Read several verses following the text, and find further illustrations of this insincere repentance: insincere because it is, in a sense, forced. The Millerite excitement swept many people into the churches; but when the fateful date in 1843 passed without the coming of Christ, the pressure of motives was removed, and many went back to sin, or plunged into infidelity.

Do not these considerations make it seem very improbable that any man will be saved through death-bed repentance? Is it not a slim chance to which they are trusting who are postponing the time of their return to God? Can a man afford to assume this uninsurable risk? A Jewish teacher said to his pupils, "Be sure to repent one day before you die." They said no man knows when he will die, therefore it was impossible to follow their teacher's advice. "Then," said he, "repent to-day, for you may die to-morrow."

We ought not to close our study of this subject without a glance at its moral aspect. The plan is to serve God as little as possible; to give him the gleanings of our lives instead of the harvest; to give the world our strength, and God our weakness; to use our lives for ourselves,

and give our death to God; in the quaint language of Lorenzo Dow, to "burn out the candle of life in the service of the devil, and throw the snuff into the Almighty's face." Christ died for us, but we are only anxious to die in Christ; we are not willing to live in him and for him. Is it honest? Is it right? Is it not mean?

CHRISTIANITY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

“While they yet believed not for joy.”—LUKE, 24:41.

The state of mind indicated by the text, is of sufficiently frequent occurrence to be well understood. When the aged Jacob, who had long mourned his favorite son as dead, was told that “Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt,” then “Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not.” The Psalmist declared, “When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream;” that is, it did not seem real that so blessed a change had come. Peter, delivered from prison, at first “wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.” And the people who were praying for his deliverance, were with difficulty persuaded that Peter was at liberty, and was knocking at the gate. The text exhibits the temporary unbelief of the apostles because it seemed too great a happiness to receive their Master back from the dead. The resurrection of Christ was the crowning miracle by which his claim to be the Messiah was demonstrated. Christianity rests its claims securely on the “many infallible

proofs" of the Savior's resurrection from the dead. Of Christianity, as of the Lord's resurrection, it may be said, in keeping with the sentiment of the text, that it seems *too good to be true*.

Christianity has been strangely misunderstood and grossly caricatured, not only by its enemies, but by some of its friends. There are systems of theology that are built of metaphysics, instead of being constructed from the New Testament; they omit the life and love that characterize the Gospel of Christ; they bind man and God with chains of law, instead of binding God to man and man to God with cords of love.

Akin to these misconceptions of Christianity, and indicative of a worse moral, if not of a worse mental, condition, is that perverseness which will see only the reverse side of the Gospel, or the dark background of the beautiful religion of love painted by the hand of Christ. These perverters of the Gospel see in it law rather than the Redeemer, restraint rather than constraint, malediction instead of benediction, sorrowful tidings instead of good news, sin but not salvation, hell but not heaven. These men choose to look on the God of the Bible, not as a Father, but a Judge, a hard Master, not a merciful Helper. They see in Christ a foe, not a friend: to them he seems like a representative of justice whom they would beg to "depart out of

their coasts," rather than the incarnation of Divine Love calculated to "draw all men" to the cross on which he was "lifted up." They know he said, "Depart, ye cursed," but forget his other words, "Come, ye blessed." They regard Jesus as one whose purity unfits him to sympathize with sinning men, forgetting that by his experiences, sufferings and temptations, he became "touched with a feeling of our infirmities."

Before noting a few reasons why the religion of Christ seems too good to be true, let us try to clear away some difficulties that, to some minds, seem insurmountable. With reference to what are called the harsh doctrines of the Gospel, specially those pertaining to sin and its punishment, we may note that Christianity is not responsible for the depravity of man, nor for the punishment that follows sin here and hereafter. Men talk of the Bible *doctrines* of the fall of man and original sin, when they ought to speak of the *facts* concerning these matters, which the Bible records as matter of history. An infidel lecturer in Wisconsin made an objection to that book because it teaches that woman, who is the angel-part of the human race, was the first sinner. Should history lie, in order to be chivalrous to the gentler sex? There would be sin in the world if there were no Gospel; sin was in the world, and suffering for sin, before a word

of the Bible was written. Sin and suffering exist where the Gospel has never been preached. Blot out every page of the Bible, destroy the Book and all knowledge derived from it; you can not thereby diminish the quantity of sin and suffering in the world.

It is easy to turn this apology into an argument. In nature and in our experience, God teaches us that he is the foe of sin; in the Bible, he reveals more clearly the nature and the effects of sin, and tells of danger ahead. Sin naturally leads man to ruin: Christianity demonstrates its Divine benevolence by standing in his path with a torch burning with the lurid fires of hell; and with this red light tries to warn him in time to save him from destruction. Now why is it that this Divine benevolence, whose voice is heard in every Scripture warning or threat, whose "good will toward men" is seen in every Bible picture of hell—why is it that it seems too good to be true? Is not this the answer?—Sin, every sin, not only injures the sinner, but defies God; the sinner counts God as an enemy, considers his laws severe, his work irksome: yet God, instead of destroying him, tries to save him; instead of considering him an enemy, treats him as a friend. It seems too good to be true.

But the Christian Revelation does something more than to show our condition and warn us of our danger; it tells of a way of escape, a way

made known only in the Bible. Nay, more: it *provides* a way of escape, declaring that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And thus it offers Divine help to every soul striving against sin. Man, weak and sinful by nature, is offered help by grace; the supernatural comes to the rescue of the natural; the arm of the Almighty is extended to every man who sincerely desires to be saved.

In setting forth the means of man's redemption, the Bible teaches that Christ, the living Word who "became flesh," is "God over all, blessed forever." The doctrine of the incarnation has often been pronounced too good to be true. We are told to study the heavens, to think of the illimitable universe of which the earth is an insignificant part. It is regarded as probable that many, if not the most, of the worlds are inhabited by intelligent beings. Man is considered as "a mud-speck on a mud-ball." Why should the great Ruler of the universe be so concerned as to this infinitesimal part of creation? How can we believe that he showed a special interest in this world and a personal interest in every member of the human family? Is it credible that he "was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"? However we may

wish and hope that this doctrine might be established, is it not too good to be true?

The Bible doctrine of immortality seems too good to be true. Man has so much of the animal, his lower nature is so prominent, his spirit so eludes the search of science, his aims, efforts and thoughts are so largely confined to his body and this life, that it seems improbable that he is an heir of immortality. His moral condition is such that it seems incredible that he can be fitted for a holy and happy eternity. The re-union of the pure in heart in heaven, seems too good to be true. Shall we clasp the hands, and see the faces, and forever enjoy the society of the dear ones we long ago bade farewell? Can heaven be a place of such glory and happiness as the Bible teaches; a world without sin, sorrow, pain or death? Is it possible that we, who have sinned so much, shall yet be among the saints in glory? Is it not beyond hope that the suffering saints of earth shall have an eternity without a pain? Can we believe that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"? And dare we hope that the happiness of heaven will abide, yea, increase, forever? Is it not too good to be true?

John Wesley refers, in one of his sermons, to a Dr. Hutcheson who was not a believer in Christianity, but who said, "Who would not wish that Christianity were true, since it is undoubt-

edly the most benevolent system of religion that has ever appeared among mankind?" (I quote from memory.) A few considerations may help us to see that the Christian religion is not incredible, though it is seemingly too good to be true.

Though in ruins by his sin, man has the grandeur and the ground-plan that prove he was built for a Temple of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel simply shows that God has undertaken to rebuild this temple; that he purposes to refit it for its original use; in a word, that man is *worth saving*. We are not to measure man by his body, but by his mind; not by his condition, but by his history, and his possibilities of development. It is not a question of the size of the earth, but of the nature of man, and of his special need of Divine help. If man is "the image and glory of God," if he was made in God's likeness, is it not credible that, to rescue his own image, God should be "made in the likeness of men"? The incarnation is not inherently improbable, and the "footprints of the Creator" are seen in the life of Jesus Christ. Man's nature and Christ's nature, man's need and the Savior's work, unite to prove the "good tidings of great joy" credible and true.

Again, Christianity is supported by evidence. The apostles "believed not for joy," but the Savior soon demonstrated the reality of his res-

urrection, and their rejoicing hearts found it was not too good to be true. His resurrection proved his claims; by it, he was "declared to be the Son of God with power." His religion is thereby stamped with Divine authority. It has abundant evidences, of every kind, to prove its truth. If it is true, it is not too good to be true. Facts convince our doubts that spring from joy.

Nothing is too good to be believed, if the good Father says it or does it. He is constantly surprising his children by wonderful tokens of his love and his care. He is always kinder to us than we had reason to expect. Should we hear that a miser had given all his hoardings to charity, we would be justified in doubting the truth of the story. But when we hear that a well-known philanthropist has become his own executor, and has given his fortune for educational or charitable purposes, the report is easily credited. Christianity is not the "Religion of Humanity," but the religion for humanity which grew out of the heart of God. It may seem too good for us, but it is not too good to be the gift of our Father. A humble citizen, receiving a valuable present from a Roman emperor, said, "Sire, this is too great a gift for me to receive." The ruler replied, "But it is not too great for Cesar to give." "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

LESSONS FROM THE THREE CROSSES.

"And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left."—LUKE, 23:33.

Taken together, these crosses give us a sample of human justice: the innocent Jesus is "numbered with the transgressors." Not always by a conscious perversion of right, by false accusers and an unjust judge, but often by fateful circumstantial evidence and by human ignorance, punishment has been meted out to innocent men. Facts are too abundant to require any citation. "What is law?"—was asked of a candidate for admission to the bar. The answer had much truth, as well as wit: "An unjust distribution of justice."

The three crosses are also a lesson in Divine Providence. God permits evil to come to good men, and permits good to come to evil men. There is nothing approaching a just allotment of rewards and punishments in this life. Thereby a future life and a just judgment become necessary.

Contemplated singly, each of these crosses has a special lesson. Look at the central

cross. On it hangs the sinless Savior who dies for sinful man. His death was in order to victory over death. His crucifixion abolished crucifixion; for the emperor Constantine, three hundred years later, out of regard for Christ, ordered that the cross should no longer be used as an instrument of punishment. Well wrote Dr. Hugh Blair: "The cross, which they thought was to stigmatize him with infamy, became the ensign of his renown; instead of being a reproach to his followers, it was to be their boast and their glory. The cross was to shine on palaces and churches throughout the earth; it was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and to wave in the banner of victorious armies, when the memory of Herod and Pilate should be accursed, when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds all over the world." Calvary, the scene of the crucifixion, was "without the gate." By a change in the walls, it is, in all probability, now included within the city. So death, by Christ's death, has been included within the Christian's possessions, and has lost its terror. Above all, the central cross teaches the love of God to man, and opens the way to pardon, holiness and heaven. By that cross lies man's way to the "crown of life." Who, when Jesus suffered on Calvary, would have supposed that one of the most common of religious emblems would be the combined cross and crown?

On one of the other crosses, a repentant robber suffered and died. He rebuked his fellow-robber, confessed the justness of their punishment, professed faith in the sinlessness of Jesus who was crucified as if he were a great criminal, and pleaded, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." To him the Savior answered, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shall thou be with me in paradise." The lessons of this man's cross may be briefly stated. Sinners may be saved; great sinners may be saved; great sinners may be saved in a moment.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

What a change, from Calvary with its sufferings and shame, to paradise! A companion of Jesus in ignominy, and, before the day had passed, a companion of the Savior in the world of bliss! This is indeed an encouraging lesson, but we may need to guard ourselves against presuming on the mercy of God. For this purpose, we need not leave that scene on Calvary.

On the third cross, died an impenitent sinner. He died as he lived, as most of us will die. Is it not safe to say that one lesson of this cross is, that if a man lives in sin, it is probable that he will die in sin? But add to this the startling fact that this unrepentant sinner died within sight and hearing of the world's Redeemer.

The only being who could save him was at his side, and was ready to save him if he desired to be saved. But from the side of that cross where the Savior gave his life for sinners, this man went out into a hopeless eternity. There is a road from Calvary to ruin; from family altars, pews and pulpits, to perdition. So near to Christ, yet unsaved. "Then I saw that there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven." Friends, it is not our nearness to Christ, but our laying hold of Christ, that saves us.

RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.

“Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”—1 THESSALONIANS, 4:18.

The words of the text close a remarkable passage in Paul's writings, and it may be well for us to read that passage before going farther. It begins with the thirteenth verse.

The clearness with which this portion of Holy Writ sets forth the re-union and recognition of friends on the other shore, is such that our text is a fitting close, for these words are full of comfort. The dead spoken of are “the dead in Christ,” who are only “asleep,” for they “sleep in Jesus.” Christians are not to sorrow for those “gone before,” as heathen and worldlings sorrow, “which have no hope.” It is stated that “them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him,” and that if we should remain on earth till the Lord comes with his saints, we “shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we,” that is, our departed friends in Christ, and ourselves, “ever be with the Lord.” The cords of love shall prove to be stronger than death, severed souls shall be

rejoined, and the glad re-union shall be for eternity.

The Master advises us to make friends by the right use of this world's goods, "that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." This intimates that our friends will be ready to welcome us to our eternal home. They maintain their interest in us, as we maintain our interest in them.

The Savior more than once speaks of "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God," in a way to indicate that they are together in the spirit-world. Moses and Elijah came together to the mount of transfiguration, and departed together. Those noble prophets had found each other and come to know each other, after they left the earth. Kinship of soul is a stronger bond than earthly friendship or natural ties.

There are two allusions to this subject in Second Corinthians. In the first chapter, Paul writes, "We are your rejoicing, even as ye are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." How could Paul rejoice over his converts in the world to come, if he did not see them and know them? In the fourth chapter are these words: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." In the resurrection-state, the apostle expected to meet his converts from Corinth.

Except the passage from which our text is taken, all these New Testament quotations are incidental allusions to our subject, rather than formal proofs of the doctrine. But they are the more valuable for that reason. They show that future recognition is *taken for granted*. Just as the Bible contains no elaborate argument for the existence of God, but in its first sentence assumes that fact; just as we are not told that man was created with the power of free choice, but learn from the record that the prohibition and the condemnation are evidences that God treated man as free and responsible; so the doctrine of future recognition is assumed, and we are not to expect an array of proof-texts to support it. The yearnings of the human heart, the almost universal belief of the doctrine in all ages, and the fact that the Bible nowhere contradicts it, are no small evidence of the truth of future recognition. If the Scriptures were perfectly silent on the topic, we should feel that that silence is eloquent in approval of this doctrine of the heart and of natural religion.

We may approach our subject in another way. It is plainly taught in Scripture that we shall survive the stroke of death; that all that goes to make up our individuality will continue to exist. We shall be consciously the same persons we were here; our characters and our mental powers will be unchanged by moving out of our

“earthly house” into the “house not made with hands;” our memory must, therefore, be active: how, then, can it be otherwise than that our earthly history will be remembered, and our friends will still be dear to us? Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the resurrection and the spiritual body, the resurrection, however viewed, teaches the personal identity of the risen. We shall be *ourselves*, not some ethereal beings developed from us, and forgetting their origin and antecedents.

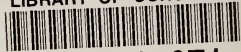
Add to this that we may reasonably expect an increase of our knowledge as soon as we reach the spirit-world, and it would seem we shall have no reason to doubt that we shall know our friends when we meet them. A Scotchman was on his death-bed. His weeping wife said to him, “Sandie, do you think we shall know each other in heaven?” The reply was, “Woman, do you think we shall know less there than we do here?”

If it be asked, “How shall we know our friends?”—the answer might be that we can not expect to know much of the heavenly world till we reach it. But we may help ourselves a little by considering how many things there are by which we recognize our friends here. You know your friend by his face; but you also recognize him by his dress, his form, his gait, the sound of his voice or of his step; you also know him by

his tastes, his moods, his very whims and peculiarities: by many marks he is distinguishable from any other person. In the case of our heart-friends, it is the "inner man" that we know, the soul that animates the body. We would know that soul *in another body*, if it could exchange bodies with some other person. Why should there be any difficulty in our recognizing it in a "spiritual body," when we get such a body for ourselves?

Christian friends, we shall soon be where many of our dear ones have already gone. Death divided us; death shall reunite us. While we shall love the Lord most in heaven, as we love him most here, we shall love him all the more, there as here, for the gift of our friends. We shall love them in him, as we love him for them. And with hearts knit together in love for God, we shall rejoice that farewells are a thing of the past. May we all be there!

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